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THE CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT

By FRANCIS GREENWOOD PEABODY

The Church of the Spirit
The Apostle Paul and the Modern World
Jesus Christ and the Social Question
Jesus Christ and the Christian Character
The Christian Life in the Modern World
The Approach to the Social Question
The Religion of an Educated Man
The Religious Education of an American Citizen

THE CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT

A Brief Survey of the Spiritual Tradition in Christianity

BY

FRANCIS GREENWOOD PEABODY

PLUMMER PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN MORALS (EMERITUS)
IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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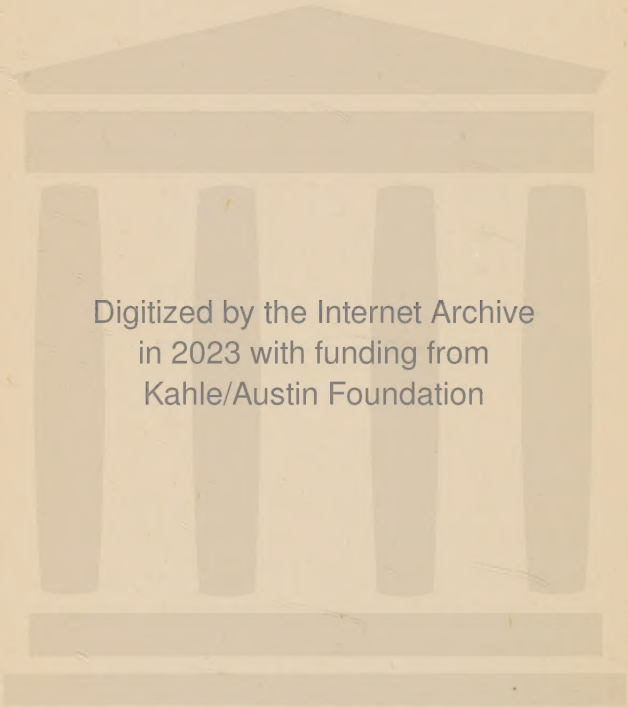
TO

F. W. P., Jr.

AGED 1 YEAR

WHAT WONDERS YOU MAY LIVE TO SEE, MY DEAR;
NO SECRETS WHERE YOUR MIND MUST HUMBLY BOW,
NO DISTANT TIME OR PLACE, NO FAR OR NEAR,
BUT THE WHOLE WORLD ONE OMNIPRESENT NOW;
THE HEAVENS DARKENED BY AERIAL SHIPS
UPON THEIR MULTITUDINOUS ERRANDS SENT;
THE AIR REPORTING ON ITS UNSEEN LIPS
THE CONVERSATIONS OF A CONTINENT!
YES, YOU MAY GLORY IN THAT WONDROUS SCENE;
ITS GIANT STRUCTURES DWARFING BABEL'S TOWER;
ITS TEEMING CITIES WHERE WASTE PLAINS HAD BEEN,
A WORLD OF HEADLONG SPEED AND HARNESSED POWER.

BUT HAS THAT WORLD OF MULTIPLYING GOODS
ATTAINED SERENITY OR QUICKENED LOVE;
INTERPRETED THE SOUL'S VICISSITUDES,
OR LEARNED THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE?
AH, STRIVE FOR THINGS THAT STAY, BELOVED BOY;
THE VISION PROMISED TO THE PURE IN HEART!
WHAT IS A WORLD THAT KNOWS NOT PEACE OR JOY?
WHY BUILD AND GAIN AND HOARD—AND THEN DEPART?
NOT TO THE GREAT OR WISE OR HIGH IN PLACE,
IS RIGHT OF ENTRANCE TO GOD'S KINGDOM GIVEN;
BUT TO THE CHILDLIKE INNOCENCE AND GRACE
WHICH YOU HAVE BROUGHT US AS A GIFT FROM HEAVEN.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PREFACE

THIS book is the last of a series of short studies which have been concerned with the teaching of the New Testament and its applicability to modern life.[1] The conclusion was reached in the earlier volumes that the essential and significant element in that teaching was to be found in a spiritual tradition rather than in a formal organization; that Jesus came, not primarily to found an institution, but to inspire and redeem personal and social life. The further question now presents itself of the transmission and perpetuation of that spiritual tradition, through the consecrated characters of individuals and the associated activities of the Christian church. What kind of church will represent a spiritual Christianity? What will be the internal dangers which it will encounter? What will be the external enemies which it must overcome? How shall the church of the Spirit militant become at last the church of the Spirit triumphant? These are some of the problems of contemporary life which the maintenance of a

[1] "Jesus Christ and the Social Question," 1900; "Jesus Christ and the Christian Character," 1905; "The Christian Life in the Modern World," 1914; "The Apostle Paul and the Modern World," 1923.

spiritual tradition involves; and with these the following brief chapters are chiefly concerned.

There is a further aspect of the inquiry of which the reader should be forewarned. As this study of the spiritual tradition in Christianity has proceeded, it has become inevitably involved with the writer's own religious experiences and decisions; and though free, it is hoped, from polemical temper or aim, it approaches at some points an exposition of the principles generally known as those of Liberal Christianity. Indeed, this specific application of the subject carries one still further; for one cannot write of the religious ideals which sustain him without making something like a confession of personal faith. What was at first designed as a historical survey thus becomes, in effect, a kind of *apologia pro fide sua;* with which one may not inappropriately, though with a deep sense of unworthiness, conclude these studies of spiritual Christianity.

The first of the following chapters was published as an article in the *Yale Review* of April, 1924, and is now reprinted, with some modification and expansion, by kind permission of the Editor. The book as a whole contains, with some changes of form and emphasis, the substance of three Hibbert Lectures, given at Oxford, England, in April, 1925.

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THE CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT

THE CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT

CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH OF AUTHORITY AND THE CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT

Among the many causes of division which have perplexed and distressed Christians one issue has become of late increasingly conspicuous, and creates the most definite, and perhaps the only distinct, line of cleavage. It runs between those who are primarily concerned with Christianity as an institution and those who find its essential character in an experience; between dogmatic Christianity and spiritual Christianity; between the church of authority and what may be loosely defined as the church of the Spirit.

There are, it is true, great numbers of devout and sincere Christians for whom such a distinction does not exist. The church of authority is precious to them because it promotes the life of the spirit. The institution is to them the instru-

ment of inspiration; the altar is the symbol of their faith; the creed is the anchor of their hope; the surrender to the institution is the discovery of themselves. When, however, one turns to the history of organized Christianity, or to its official pronouncements at the present time, a definite distinction may be observed. The church of authority is so impressive in dimensions and so sweeping in claims that it is generally assumed to be the normal expression of Christian faith. Historians of the church deal for the most part with its personages and events. The Christian religion, according to this view, is committed to a divinely established authority, or transmitted through a divinely inspired book. It may be the rock of Peter or it may be the rock of Scripture which thus guarantees stability; in either case, the Christian church assumes the form of an external, official, and authoritative organization. Papal Encyclicals, Anglican Articles, Westminster Confessions, and similar documents, announce or define Christian truth. Fundamentalists and sacramentalists, differ as they may concerning the source of infallibility, are alike in their acceptance of a conclusive authority to which one should conform.

Such has been, for many centuries, the accredited teaching of the church of authority. On the one hand, the Council of Trent reaffirmed

the Nicene Creed, "as being that principle wherein all who profess the faith of Christ necessarily agree, and that firm and alone foundation against which the gates of hell shall never prevail";[1] on the other hand, the Lutheran theology unequivocally taught that "the canonical books of the Old Testament are those which were written by prophets who foretold the advent of the Messiah, and by the prophetic spirit, that is, by immediate Divine inspiration put into the Hebrew language . . . which have been transmitted to us uncorrupted, to be the permanent rule and norm of faith and life in the Universal Church. . . . The canonical books of the New Testament are those which were written by the evangelists and apostles in the Greek language by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit" (*immediato Spiritus S. afflatu*).[2] The Christian religion thus became a matter either of intellectual submission or of documentary evidence. The infallibility of the pope and the inerrancy of Scripture are essentially kindred doctrines. Protestants who repudiate the authority of Rome may maintain the same principle concerning the authority of the Bible. Indeed, it is obvious that in this controversy between rival infallibilities the

[1] Third Session, Feb. 4, 1546.

[2] Quenstedt, "Theologia didactico-polemica," 4th ed., 1701, pp. 59, 60, 235.

advantage is with the Catholic position. Fixed and immutable as its source of authority appears to be, it is in effect subject to restatement or modification. The revealed truth receives from time to time fresh revelation. The Protestant authority, on the other hand, resides in an oracle which has spoken once for all, and permits no modification or flexibility. An infallible text may thus be more restrictive than an infallible pope, and interpretation of the Bible by divination may be less intelligent than obedience to Rome by submission. It has been justly said that "this unintelligent attitude towards the Bible is at present the greatest obstacle to the prosperity of the Evangelical party." [3]

Within this great organization of the church of authority, whether Catholic or Protestant, the primary obligation of the individual becomes that of conformity. He attaches himself to the institution; he accepts its standards; he "joins" the church; he "takes orders" from his superiors; he sings the militant hymn:

> Like a mighty army
> Moves the Church of God.

There may ensue for him a sense of security and tranquillity, the happy assurance of membership in a great historic institution, with its transmitted fund of revealed truth. The announce-

[3] W. R. Inge, "Types of Christian Saintliness," 1915, p. 49.

ments of the authorized creeds are no longer propositions to be interpreted, but statements of fact, acceptance of which is a condition of inclusion in the church, and denial of which involves self-exclusion. Prompt and unqualified obedience, as of a loyal soldier in the ranks, becomes the most elementary Christian virtue. "From the time that I became a Catholic," wrote Cardinal Newman in his spiritual autobiography, "of course, I had no further history of my religious opinions to narrate." [4] To the same effect the saintly Faber records his complete submission: "I cease to be an individual. I seem to fall into my own place quietly and without disturbance, and the noiseless path of childlike obedience . . . offers a calm and peaceful prospect of spiritual growth." [5]

The same confident assurance is expressed by many later witnesses, both Catholic and Protestant. "Faith," announces a brilliant Catholic writer, "is the acceptance of a truth and the refusal to entertain the opposite to that truth, although proof is absent. . . . Harnack uttered a profound truth in what he intended for a sneer when he said that men either had their own religion or somebody else's religion. The religion

[4] "Apologia pro Vita Sua," 1864, p. 373.

[5] Bowden, "Life and Letters of F. W. Faber," 1869, p. 72; *cf.* pp. 236, 237.

of the Catholic . . . is essentially an acceptance of the religion of others; which others are the apostolic clergy, the conciliar decrees and all that proceeds from the authoritative voice of the church. . . . The modern world has lapsed from faith into opinion outside the Catholic body." [6] Not less unqualified is the definition of a Christian proposed by a leading advocate of the so-called fundamentalists. "One is a Christian because he maintains certain facts which have been known for many hundreds of years. In particular he believes that on a certain morning some nineteen hundred years ago, the body of Jesus of Nazareth emerged from the tomb in which it had been laid. . . . The Christian risks the whole of his life upon his conviction as to the resurrection of Christ." [7]

By such loyalty to the church as an institution, or to the Bible as an authority, the individual may become released from solitude, doubt or despair, and feel himself an heir of the ages, and a companion of the glorious company of the apostles, the noble army of martyrs, and the holy church throughout all the world. From this point of view the great epochs of Christian history appear to have occurred when the external organization of the church has been most definitely assured or

[6] Belloc, "The Contrast," 1924, pp. 158-160.
[7] J. G. Machen, *The Survey*, July 1, 1924.

its creed most clearly defined. As the history of modern Europe records the diplomatic or military achievements of Napoleon or Pitt or Bismarck, so the historian of the church records the epochs of ecclesiastical transition or expansion. Ignatius and the authority of bishops; Athanasius and the definition of orthodoxy; Cyprian and the apostolic succession; Hildebrand and the primacy of Rome; Luther and the great secession,—figures and incidents like these represent Christian history. The church becomes the body of Christ, and that body grows in mass and coherence, or is threatened by dismemberment, or again renews its vitality. The history of the Christian church becomes a record of theological controversies or of ecclesiastical development and decline. Catholics and Protestants, far apart as they may appear to stand, may agree in the acceptance of a revelation which is not to be questioned, but to be welcomed and obeyed. Protestant literalists might concur in the confession of Cardinal Newman: "From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion. I know no other religion, and cannot enter into the idea of any other religion." The teaching of Cyprian in the third century has become an accepted principle of much modern ecclesiasticism: "The Church is founded upon the bishops, and every act of the Church is controlled by these same

rulers." [8] "The episcopate is one, each part of which is held by each one for the whole. The Church also is one. . . . Whoever is separated from the Church . . . is separated from the promises of the Church." [9]

The development of institutional Christianity thus briefly indicated has been, as the history of the church abundantly demonstrates, inevitable. Religious experience must be rationalized and systematized. A theology is the legitimate offspring of a religion. Ideals become incarnate in institutions. It is not merely the motive of self-defence which promotes organization, but the deeper desire for reassurance and fellowship. Stability, continuity, and legality are the marks of a visible church. It counts its converts; it measures its progress; it guarantees its creed. The institution sustains the individual by its authority, its dimensions, and its permanence. "He can no longer have God for his Father," said Cyprian, "who has not the Church for his mother." [10] Indeed, it is not infrequently the conscious lack of spiritual initiative which drives the self-distrustful life to the protection of an established order. Personal doubt may promote ecclesiastical conformity. A disheartened intel-

[8] Epistle xxvi. [9] *De unitate eccles.*, 4.
[10] *De unitate eccles.*, 6. (*Habere jam non potest Deum patrem, qui Ecclesiam non habet matrem.*)

lectualism easily reverts to a confident sacerdotalism. Where the spirit fails, the form may become sacred. Many a modern mind recognizes in itself the inclination which a historian of the church has discovered in no less a person than St. Augustine, "Men of considerable intellectual activity, wearied with the questionings and scepticisms which they cannot resolve, fall back upon external authority as the only mode of silencing the reason and satisfying the conscience." [11]

Yet, with all these manifest advantages of security and continuity, the church as an institution is confronted by grave difficulties. It may easily be tempted to conceive of religious faith, not as a spiritual experience, but as an assent to certain propositions concerning God and man. It may subordinate the imitation of Christ to the adoration of Christ, and require conformity rather than consecration. The soul of the church may languish while its body still thrives, and the end for which the church exists may be forgotten in devotion to the means. A pope may be the authoritative vicar of Christ without manifesting the humility of Christ. A creed may define with precision the events of the life of Jesus or his relation to God, without committing the worshipper to any pledge of Christian character.

[11] A. V. G. Allen, "The Continuity of Christian Thought," 1884, p. 3.

One may affirm that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost without being himself born again; or that Christ was raised from the dead, without being himself risen with Christ and seeking those things which are above. He may believe in the resurrection of the body in heaven, without mortifying his members which are upon the earth. In short, he may hold with complete conviction most of the articles of the ancient creeds without being prepared to meet the apostolic test, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." A curious nemesis may thus confront Christian apologetics, for it has at times reached such elaboration of statement concerning the nature and mission of Jesus Christ that it becomes more than questionable whether the founder of Christianity could meet the tests of membership proposed by his church, or be fairly entitled to the name of Christian.

To recognize these qualifications is by no means to conclude that a creed is unimportant or superfluous. Every thinking person has a creed, if it be only the creed that all creeds are false. To deny one creed is to affirm another, and to deny all creeds is to confess that one has given up thinking. But a creed is not a religion. It is a scaffolding erected round the structure of faith. The scaffolding is essential to the building, but it does not support the building, and as the build-

ing is reconstructed a new scaffolding may be necessary. The creeds of the early church were designed to controvert certain conceptions which prevailed at the time of their composition, and they bear the marks of this occasionalism; but as these ancient controversies with Docetism or Sabellianism or Monophysitism become antiquated or forgotten, the creeds which refute them lose much of their vitality and force. The descent of Jesus into the place of departed spirits, and the ascent of his body until he was "received up out of their sight," report an age when the world appeared to be flat, heaven in the sky, and Hades under ground; the virgin birth and the resurrection of the body were the best which those centuries could make of the mystery of a divine life in human flesh; the subtle distinctions in the Godhead which the later creeds affirm reflect the ingenious metaphysics of Hellenic Christianity. "The best thing we know about Athanasius," it has been lately said, "is that he did not write the Athanasian Creed; and it is good to know that the apostles got on very well without the Apostles' Creed." [12]

In the nature of the case, therefore, a creed is subject to change with the changing thought of the world. An ancient creed should be regarded with reverence as a monument of piety, but it

[12] W. E. Barton, *Congregationalist*, Sept. 11, 1924.

can rarely be repeated as a personal confession; and to preface it with the words, "I believe," may be to run grave risk, either of abandoning the first principles of modern thinking, or of using sacred words in an equivocal sense. The last virtue which the Christian church can afford to lose is that of intellectual integrity. To demand the reverent acceptance of a creed which is merely a historical survival; to accept the language and beliefs of another age as adequately expressing the convictions of the present age; to teach that Jesus was "conceived by the Holy Ghost" and mean that he was "conceived in the mind of God"; to announce that the phrase "born of the virgin Mary" "affirms the fact that Jesus came forth not by chance or unaccountably," or that "the resurrection of the body" means that "to every soul set free by death God gives a body as it hath pleased him";—[13] all this equivocal advocacy of early Christology is not so likely to raise opposition as it is to encourage complete indifference. To the modern mind, especially that of youth, such definitions simply lie outside the area of intelligent discussion. Scrupulous accuracy in the use of words is a first principle of the scientific habit of mind, and the accommodation of ancient symbols to modern thought may become an

[13] G. A. Johnston Ross, "The God We Trust," 1913, pp. 67, 73.

active agent of indifference, or even of contempt. Professor Sanday has most justifiably said that this inclination to translate archaic phrases into their modern equivalent may "make the ministry of the Church of England impossible for many thinking and instructed men." [14]

What is true of the creeds of the church is not less true of its sacraments. When a distinguished bishop asks: "Who are members of the church?" and answers: "The Christian church consists of all who have been baptized into Christ and who believe in the Lord Jesus," [15] he is confronted by the unquestionable fact that many baptized persons are not, in the conduct of their lives, entitled to the name of Christians, and that many unbaptized persons have the mind of Christ

[14] Sanday, "Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism," 1914, p. 6. The difficulty thus involved is recognized with complete candor by an advocate of flexibility in interpretation, in commenting on the Pastoral Letter of 1923 to the Protestant Episcopal Church: "To deny, or treat as immaterial, belief in the Creed, in which at every regular service of the Church the minister and people profess to believe," the bishops had said, "is to trifle with words, and cannot but expose us to the suspicion and the danger of dishonesty and unreality," and the critic of this document frankly replies: "The plain fact is that the common sense views of veracity echoed in that statement from the Pastoral with which this chapter began, popular as they may be, and self-evident as they may sound, on second thought place all members of a church which retains an historic liturgy and ancient creeds in a hopeless dilemma." "Creeds and Loyalty," New York, 1924, pp. 125, 139.

[15] Bishop of Gloucester, in New York, Oct. 19, 1924.

and would be welcomed by him as disciples. Membership in the Church of Christ under such external tests may indeed become so completely institutionalized and despiritualized that at last, as in the Athanasian Creed, Christology may altogether supplant discipleship, and unverifiable metaphysics may become the condition without which one "without doubt shall perish everlastingly."

What could be more contrary to the simplicity which is in Christ than the appropriation of the two forms of symbolism which he accepted, the rite of baptism and the commemoration of the Lord's Supper, as barriers of exclusion or tests of orthodoxy. Jesus takes a little child in his arms and says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"; but the church of authority often demands in its service of consecration a confession of the sinfulness of the innocent infant, and the acceptance of a creed which Jesus himself could not have understood. Jesus, in the poignant anticipation of his death, bids his friends, as often as they eat and drink, remember him; but the church of authority often erects this touching symbolism into a wall of division, or transforms it into an ecclesiastical miracle. Many a child has received baptism on terms which he is likely to reject in later life; many a disciple of Jesus has found himself debarred by an inadequate

Christology from communion with his departed Lord; and as the saddest consequence of such unjustifiable limitation, many a modern mind has found itself alienated from the ministry of a church which should have sustained and satisfied him.

Thus it has come to pass that, along with this inevitable growth of the church as an institution, there has appeared throughout the whole course of Christian history another type of faith and fellowship; at times conspicuous, again declining in vitality, and yet again recovering strength and persuasiveness. It is a form of discipleship less easily defined because it is progressive, expanding, spiritual. It is sufficient to call it, in contrast with the church as an institution, the church of the Spirit. It is, in the noble words of the Anglican Communion Service, "the blessed company of all faithful people"; or, in the announcement of a Congregational Council, "a unity in the spirit of Christ"; or again, as a group of Presbyterians has lately affirmed, "the Spirit of God speaking to the Christian believer." The church of the Spirit thus represents the ancient prophecy of Jeremiah, repeated in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: . . . I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall

be to me a people." The church of the Spirit cherishes the saying of Irenaeus: "Where the Church is there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is there is the Church and every kind of grace";[16] and the more unequivocal teaching of Ignatius: "Wherever Christ Jesus is there is the Catholic Church."[17] The rock on which the church of the Spirit is built is the indestructible and substantial consciousness of a living God, or, as a Catholic mystic has affirmed, "the Supreme Richness, the unspeakable Concreteness and overwhelming Aliveness of God."[18] This comprehensive fellowship of religious experience is sustained by the mighty promise that the Spirit of truth, when it is come, will guide men into all truth. To the church of the Spirit, the most precious incidents of Christian history are not those of theological or ecclesiastical transition, but those of religious revival, —the testimony of saints and seers, the experience of holy souls, the convincing evidence of the life of God in the souls of men.

Such a fellowship may create strange and surprising affinities. Lives which seem hopelessly separated by the divisions of the organized church may find themselves speaking the same language and walking the same way. Ecclesi-

[16] *Adv. Haeres.*, III, 24. [17] *Ad. Smyrn.*, c. 8.
[18] F. von Hügel, "Eternal Life," 1912, p. 383.

astical barriers fall as one approaches this spiritual intimacy. Thomas à Kempis and the "Theologia Germanica" may sustain the religious life of a convinced Protestant. The Quaker "surrender of silence" may make its appeal to Anglicans. Mediæval mystics and modern seers, Tauler and Martineau, Newman and Bushnell, Fox and Wesley, may satisfy the same spiritual hunger. Differences of sects or creeds are swept away by this spiritual inrush. The rising tide of faith penetrates the bounds of conformity, as along the seacoast a wave breaks through the beach and runs up into the interior. The church of the Spirit is an inflowing, refreshing, penetrating tide.

Here may ensue for many a serious-minded life a curious sense of divided allegiance or of unharmonized experience. One may be completely loyal to the organized communion in which he finds himself, participating in its affairs and promoting its welfare; and yet become conscious, perhaps through personal intimacy, perhaps through literary acquaintance, that a teaching, or a voice, or a character, reaches across the divisive chasm of creeds or forms with a touch of mutual understanding which stirs one with a happy surprise. No religious experience is more reassuring than this discovery of reciprocal sympathy where one had anticipated antagonism or

debate. It is the bond of many friendships, and the disclosure of the comprehensiveness of religious faith. Here, one says to himself, is that unity of the spirit which is the bond of peace; here is a common language, though with many dialects; here is that modern Pentecost in which one meets "devout men out of every nation under heaven," and hears them "speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

Here also, it must be admitted, occurs the tragedy of many devout souls. They find themselves members of an organization which demands conformity, but their nature craves release. A spiritual schism may thus rend their minds. Their place is in the church as an institution, while their hearts dwell in the church of the Spirit. In the epoch-making volume of Auguste Sabatier, in which he contrasts the religions of authority with the religion of the Spirit, or, in other words, a "supernatural institution" with an "inner inspiration," he describes the latter as "flowing beneath the other, an invisible, subterranean stream of thought and life gushing up intermittently through breaches that become larger with the advancing years." [19] It is an accurate picture. The church of the Spirit has all the mobility and variability of a swift and winding stream. It

[19] "Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit," 1904, p. 314.

has its shoals and eddies, its dangerous rapids, its calm and sunny pools; but through all these diversified experiences it maintains its continuity and makes its way steadily towards the sea of communion with God.

No rigid line of partition, therefore, can be drawn which shall separate the religion of the Spirit from the external forms and programmes prescribed and transmitted by institutionalism. The main current of organized Christianity and the "subterranean stream" which "gushes up intermittently" are alike channels for the water of life. The witness of the Spirit may be found on the altar of the church of authority. Mysticism may flower from ecclesiasticism. No statement of the situation is more unqualified than that of the Catholic mystic, Evelyn Underhill: "When we look into history we see the life of the Spirit, even from its crudest beginnings, closely associated with two movements. First, with the tendency to organize it in communities or churches, living under special sanctions and rules. Next, with the tendency of its greatest, most arresting personalities either to revolt from these organisms or to reform, rekindle them from within. So that the institutional life of religion persists in spite of its own constant tendency to stiffen and lose fervor, and the secessions, protests, or renewals which are occasioned by its greatest

sons." [19a] Indeed, it is another representative of the Roman Catholic Church who has plainly indicated this twofold tradition: "Roman Catholics," Bishop Keane has said, "acknowledge a distinction between the *body* of the church, which is the visible organization, and the *soul,* which is the aggregate of all the just, known to God alone, and united in the Holy Ghost through grace. So that there may be those in the body who are not in the soul, and *vice versa.*" [19b] It is with institutionalism as it is with politics. One may be in political life a loyal Republican or Democrat without thereby forfeiting the larger patriotism which exceeds the bounds of party. In the same way, one may be a convinced Romanist, like Baron von Hügel, while at the same time one is primarily concerned with the vision of "Eternal Life."

One may often observe both these aspects of Catholic worship as he enters a church of that communion. On the altar lie the supernaturally transformed elements, and before these symbols of the church of authority bow the officiating priests; but in the dim aisles of the great church, far from the blaze of light and glow of vestments, one sees the kneeling figures of silent worshippers,

[19a] "The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today," 1922, p. 120.

[19b] *Cf.* Universal Encyclopedia, 1900, Vol. II, s.v. "Church."

laying their burdens before the shrine, and departing with their burdens lifted and their hearts at peace. The body of the church has held them in its arms, but its soul has touched them with its healing. They have been delivered from discussion by yielding to devotion. Symbolism may stir their hearts and quiet their minds; but the splendors of the church of authority are only a glowing pathway for their silent entrance into the church of the Spirit.

It must be admitted, however, that this consciousness of personal communion and initiative which the church of the Spirit inculcates often involves collision with a superimposed faith; and is not infrequently distrusted or condemned by the church of authority. It may be an individual who, while loyal to his superiors, finds himself swept beyond the mediating care of priest or sect. It may be a group of modernists, proposing to spiritualize the standards of the church and at last finding themselves exiled from the fold. It may be an outright departure from protecting authority into a new heresy or schism. In each case the influx of spiritual vitality is likely to encounter repression or rebuke. The institution tends to close round the life of the spirit, like a hardening shell, and the vision of God must break through in protest or secession. Jesus himself is rejected by the religious leaders of his

people, and dies as a criminal instead of being welcomed as a Messiah. The Apostle Paul proposes the universalizing of the Christian message, but is regarded by the first disciples as a dangerous heretic. It has been the same throughout Christian history. The religion of experience often seems to threaten the religion of conformity, and the church of authority represses the church of the Spirit. Heresy in England as late as the sixteenth century was a form of high treason; and in 1864 Pope Pius IX, in his "Syllabus of Errors," announced, "Whoever says that the Roman Pontiff can or ought to come to terms with progress, liberalism, or modern civilization, let him be accursed."

Nor is this rejection of the spirit by the institution peculiar to Christianity. The same experience of reproach and isolation has been repeatedly met at the hands of established authority. When Spinoza, for example, reaffirmed the immanence of God, becoming the teacher of Lessing, Goethe, and Coleridge, and justifying the eulogy of Schleiermacher, "The sublime Spirit of the world penetrated him . . . he was full of religion and of the Holy Spirit," the guardians of the Hebrew faith strained the very language of abuse in their sentence of excommunication: "By the sentence of the angels, by the decree of the saints, we anathematize, cut off, curse, and execrate Baruch

Spinoza. . . . Cursed be he by day, and cursed by night; cursed when he lieth down, and cursed when he riseth up. . . . The Lord blot out his name under heaven." [20]

Or, again, when the daring Spaniard, Michael Servetus, teaching an exalted doctrine of the mission of Christ, failed to conform to the tenets of Calvinism, he was sentenced to be tied to a stake and "burned alive until thy body is reduced to ashes." There was little welcome in the Anglican Church for the spiritual fervor of Wesley, and quite against his will he became an apostle of dissent. The Society of Friends committed itself to the inner light of divine guidance, and sustained the faith of the church by the *Journal* of Woolman and the lyrics of Whittier. Yet this spiritual fellowship, which has of late so generously obeyed the great command, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him," still remains to the institutionalized church a paradox or a heresy. Here is a group of believers which dissents at many points from the prevailing creed; unbaptized pacifists, without minister, priesthood or ritual; yet so manifestly possessed by the mind of Christ that their right to his acceptance becomes impossible to deny. It may be difficult to reckon them as of the church of authority; but

[20] *Cf.* Matt. Arnold, "Essays in Criticism," First Series, "Spinoza and the Bible."

they are convincing witnesses of the church of the Spirit.

Over against the spiritual tragedy often involved in such poignant experiences must be set the sense of exhilaration with which many lives become aware of the larger sympathies and comprehensive tradition of the church of the Spirit. The solitary or rejected life is reassured by discovering a fellowship larger than that of any sect or creed. It is surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. It is as if one were in a foreign land where he failed to make himself understood, and suddenly heard his own language spoken and his way made plain. It is not that he becomes less a citizen of his own country, but that he finds himself among friends in another continent of the spiritual life. It is not a question of alternatives, but rather of an outer and an inner region of faith, of the scaffolding and the building, of the shell and the pearl; or, to reverse the figure, it is not a question of the area occupied, but of the atmosphere surrounding it, of the place and the climate, of the valleys and the hills, of the limited and the broader horizon. In a word, it is the transfer of loyalty from the form to the spirit, from the transient to the permanent, from organization to inspiration, from symbol to reality.

Beyond the controversies which beset one's own communion lies this broader area of companion-

ship, which delivers him from provincialism and enlarges his range of sympathy. From the most varied regions come the testimonies of wise and saintly souls, which have discovered, sometimes through torturing doubt, sometimes through tranquil meditation, the sources of religious confidence and hope. Mediæval mystics speak across the centuries to modern Protestants; a teacher like Emerson, standing quite beyond the limits of the church, may restore the spiritual confidence of Christians; and behind all these varied interpreters of the religious life, with their diverse experiences blending in a common confession, stands the figure of the Nazarene teacher, with his summons to repentance and his vision of a kingdom of God. Renewal of loyalty to this convincing Master brings to many a responsive life a happy sense of spiritual emancipation, and it turns with a tranquil joy from the discordant controversies of the church of authority to the richer harmonies of the church of the Spirit.

Here, then, are two ways of Christian loyalty, —the way of conformity and the way of consecration; the acceptance of the Christian religion as a governmental scheme, and the recognition of the Christian religion as a spiritual experience. The two discipleships may overlap or coexist; but they make their appeals to different temperaments or habits of mind. As Coleridge said that every

man was born a Platonist or an Aristotelian, so it may be reasonably maintained that one type of character is irresistibly persuaded by the desire for fixity, finality, and stability, while another demands freedom, mobility, room to grow. The difference has been stated, on the one hand, with complete candor by an Anglican bishop in his exposition of sacramentalism: "We have now contrasted broadly the different views of the religion of the Spirit,—that with which we are familiar in a great deal of the modern literature on the subject, which would represent it as universal in humanity, with that which is presented in the New Testament, where it appears that the gift of the Spirit is given only in the Church." [21]

The same contrast is described from the opposite point of view by a not less competent scholar, representing the Society of Friends: "As soon as religion has closed up 'the east window of divine surprise,' " remarks Rufus Jones in the introduction of his learned and sympathetic "Studies in Mystical Religion," "and is turned into a mechanism of habit, custom, and system, it is killed. Religion thus grown formal and mechanical, though it may still have a disciplinary function in society, is no longer religion in the primary sense. The spring of joy which characterizes true religion has disappeared, the heightening, propulsive tone has

[21] Gore, "The Holy Spirit and the Church," 1924, p. 16.

vanished. It may linger on as a vestigial superstition, or a semi-automatic performance, but it is *live* religion only so long as it issues from the centre of personal consciousness and has the throb of personal experience in it." [22] Thus the fundamental difference is not so much in the desire for discipleship as in the way of approach to discipleship. One way is through intellectual consent; the other is through volitional consecration. To the one the chief agent of faith is the mind; to the other it is the will. The one teaching begins: He that knoweth the doctrine shall do the will; the other begins: Whosoever willeth to do the will shall know of the doctrine.

The church of authority will always win adherents because it seems, as the famous passage in the Gospel says, founded upon a rock; but what many minds crave is not so much the sense of a rock beneath their feet as of a movement which they share, a growing faith, a more abundant life. They want to attach themselves to what the apostle called "the church of the living God." By disposition and temperament they are members of the church of the Spirit. To them an institution is a means, not an end. They cherish the great saying of Paul, "Ye are the temple of God." The communion of saints is to them more inclusive than the communion of sects. No in-

[22] "Studies in Mystical Religion," 1909, p. xiv.

tervention of priest or sacrament is needed to insure or verify their supreme experience. To the church of the Spirit a creed is the best that theologians of the ancient world, or convocations of modern Christians, could make of the mysteries of God and man. In the nature of the case, therefore, these summaries or formulas are subject to amendment or revision. It may often happen that a prescribed creed becomes as Bacon said of riches, impedimenta, or baggage: "It cannot be spared or left behind, but it hindereth the march; yea, and the care of it sometimes loseth or disturbeth the victory." [23] One may thus have to hold his creed, instead of having his creed hold him.

In other words, the church of the Spirit, in subordinating opinions to obedience and orthodoxy to loyalty, makes the audacious assertion that the church of authority, in its formal procedure, has been tempted to take the wrong road; making central what was incidental, setting logic before life, speculation before inspiration, the letter before the spirit. Fixity in one's creed is possible only to a closed mind. It may offer security, but at the cost of movement. It holds at anchor a craft that was meant to sail. To the church of the Spirit religious faith is not a harbor, but a venture; not a cable mooring life to the

[23] Essay xxxiv, "Of Riches."

shore, but the canvas spread to catch the winds of God. "Such," it has been lately written, "is the compass and depth of the Christian religion —the Religion of the Spirit; . . . a conception of man which represents him as a vast reservoir of spiritual force, unused, undeveloped, perhaps even unborn, but waiting for liberation; . . . a conception of the world, of the universe, of reality to correspond; . . . the recovery of the lost radiance of the Christian religion." [24]

There remains the further question of the practical consequence which is likely to ensue as this issue between dogmatic Christianity and spiritual Christianity grows clear. Is it to follow that the entire structure of ecclesiasticism must be overthrown and a new organization, or what has been called a new reformation, initiated; where those who maintain the spiritual tradition shall forsake their separate communions and unite in a church of the Spirit? That would be a dramatic and in many aspects a fortunate consummation. It would relieve many modern minds of conscientious scruples and associate them in sympathetic fellowship. It might reproduce the scene in the church of Scotland, when Chalmers and his followers marched out from the Assembly, forsaking their churches and manses for conscience' sake,

[24] L. P. Jacks, "The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion," 1923, pp. 18, 19, 38.

and going out, not knowing whither they went. Such an organized movement would, however, have to contend against all the forces of deeply rooted sentiment and inherited affection. It would require a new Chalmers, not to say a new Luther, and an inflamed sense of oppression which the increasing tolerance of many communions tends to extinguish. It might easily result, as did the exodus of Chalmers, in a new church of authority, free from external control, yet by no means free from internal politics and compulsions.

What is more immediately significant, therefore, and more reassuring to many disturbed minds than any scheme of organized coöperation, is the fact that this unity of the Spirit is already existing and operative; that teachers and preachers of religion are, in increasing numbers, practically ignoring the divisions of sects and the standards of conformity in which they have been trained, and are rejoicing in a fellowship with multitudes of devout lives from which the barriers of creed or form had seemed to separate them. They worship together and work together. They find themselves confessing that in this companionship is the real Christian unity, compared with which identity of form or dogma is superficial or fictitious. Here, they gladly re-

call, is the unity for which Jesus prayed, that they all may be one, not in their opinions about the universe, or about the being of God, but in a coöperative consecration of purpose and a conformity to God's will. The church of the Spirit, in other words, is no longer a remote ideal, but a practical reality. As other programmes of unity prove impracticable under the conditions of the modern world, a wider companionship and a richer hope are discovered by the disciples of Jesus in the church of the Spirit.

What, indeed, is this beckoning ideal of a unity of spiritual tradition, holding within itself the most varied associations and beliefs, but that vision of a holy catholic church, which through all the centuries has allured the thought and inspired the faith of Christians; a church which shall contain Catholic saints and Protestant prophets, ancient mystics and the seers of the modern world; a church which is catholic because it is holy, with its apostolic succession authenticated, not by historical verification, but by contemporary sanctification; with its arms open to welcome all reverent minds and loyal wills. Slowly, often imperceptibly, this holy catholic church is already uniting lives which the competing organizations of Christendom divide. They have discovered the comprehensive affinities of

religious experience, and while they may tolerate divided organizations as providing for diversity of temperament or habit of mind, they leave the boundaries of such organizations as unguarded as the three thousand miles of frontier separating Canada from the United States, with no protecting fort or aggressive ship or threatening gun.

One turns almost at random to the prophets of modern religious life, and finds, within the diversity of doctrine or administration which they represent, this common ideal of a church more comprehensive than any external organization now represents. Such was the glowing prophecy of Robertson: "There is a church larger than the limits of the church visible, larger than Jew or Christian or the Apostle Peter dreamed; larger than our narrow hearts dare to hope even now. . . . The open vision is manifested to all in every nation who fear God and work righteousness; to all, in other words, who live devoutly towards God and by love towards man." [25] Such, again, was the comprehensive anticipation of Phillips Brooks: "The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints! Wherever men are praying, loving, trusting, seeking, and finding God, it is a true body with all its ministries of part to

[25] Sermons, Fifth Series, Sermon XIV. ("Salvation Out of the Visible Church.")

part. . . . In that runs the true chain of saint-hood, linking the ages together and making the eternal unity of the church." [26]

The same hope illuminated the appeal of an eloquent leader of non-conformist opinion in England: "Let the time come when the proof will be equally decisive, that the commonalty of every church in Christendom, the unnumbered millions of those who believe in Christ, are one with each other, because they are one with Him! . . . That time is not to be brought nearer by great movements for the suppression of ecclesiastical and doctrinal differences—by the confederation of separate churches—by skilful diplomacy for securing the celebration of a common worship, and the acceptance of a common creed. All the separate religious communities of this country might be drawn into one great ecclesiastical organization; but their external unity would have nothing in it to fill men with awe, and to compel them to say that it was the work of the Divine Spirit. All Western Europe might be restored to union with the papacy, and the long-standing quarrel between Rome and Constantinople be healed; and still there might be no sign that Christian men are really one with each other in the high supernatural sense of Christ's words—one with each other because they

[26] Sermons, Vol. I, 1878, pp. 133, 127.

are one in God. It is not of the unity of an external ecclesiastical organization that Christ is thinking, but of the unity which comes from the complete triumph of a common life." [27]

Even more explicit and unqualified was the personal confession of Channing: "There is a grander church than all particular ones, however extensive; the Church Catholic or Universal, spread over all lands, and one with the church in heaven. . . . Into this church all who partake the spirit of Christ are admitted. . . . No man can be excommunicated from it but by himself, by the death of goodness in his own breast. . . . I belong to the Universal Church. Nothing shall separate me from it." [28]

What, indeed, is this visionary hope, shared by so many minds, trained under varied traditions and associations, but a revival of the audacious dream which sustained their common Master, when he "came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God"? Round him were the demands for conformity, before him was the vision of a new order of the world. His temporal fate was determined by the church of authority; his permanent Messiahship was in the church of the Spirit. Beyond the sundered sects

[27] R. W. Dale, "Fellowship with Christ and Other Discourses," 1892, p. 315 f.

[28] "Works," VI, pp. 203, 205, 209. (Sermon on the Church.)

of his own time he saw the vision of a purified world, where controversy should be supplanted by communion, and the unity of his disciples might be patterned after his spiritual unity with the Father. His teaching flowed, in Sabatier's words, "like an invisible subterranean stream" beneath the visible church of his time. Its influence was to be like that of the leaven; its growth was to be like the ripening of the harvest. He came not to destroy but to fulfil; not to contend with the church of authority, but to convert it into a church of the Spirit.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT

If the contrast thus indicated between the church of authority and the church of the Spirit is in any degree real and significant, it may be of interest to observe, however briefly and imperfectly, some of the incidents in Christian history which illustrate the continuity of the spiritual tradition. The historians of the church have as a rule devoted their attention to the development of doctrine or form which marks the church of authority. They narrate the succession of popes, the decision of councils, and the formation of creeds. They describe the organization of dissent and the controversies of Protestantism. But has not the church of the Spirit also a history? Is it not in this record that one may discover the essential evidence of vitality and permanence in the Christian religion? Has there not been through all the Christian centuries an apostolic succession of the spiritual life, which may sustain and reassure those who would now walk in the Spirit? If, as Schiller said, the history of the world is the court which pronounces judgment

on the world, what judgment concerning the nature of the Christian religion may be derived from the history of the church of the Spirit?

This record of the spiritual tradition has been strangely neglected. Among the hundreds of works covering the entire history of the Christian church, and the thousands of treatises discussing its special controversies of sect or creed, few could be named which trace the "subterranean stream" of spiritual life and note the points where it has "gushed up" into the current of history. Indeed, the history of spiritual religion has by its very nature a quality of intermittency and fragmentariness which is in manifest contrast with the uninterrupted and verifiable programme of the organized church. Orders of clergy, administration of sacraments, and authorized confessions perpetuate a hierarchy and fortify an institution. Systems of thought, and even the passionate controversies which ensue, succeed each other in logical sequence; and the historian of Christianity, like the historian of any government or campaign, may trace the progress of events and the rise and decline of an established order, whose forms may change but whose aims persist.

The life of the spirit, on the other hand, is variable and individualized, and lacks the appearance of continuity. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof,

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but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The movement of the Spirit, like all motion in the physical world, is undulatory, rhythmic, tidal. Day and night, winter and summer, ebb and flow, have their counterparts in moments of insight and periods of obscuration; in glimpses of truth seen through passing clouds; in visions alternating with tasks; in mounts of transfiguration and valleys of shadow. Thus the church of the Spirit is not a construction but an evolution; not an architectural achievement but a vital growth, with all the diversity and spontaneity which growing life involves. If the supreme end of the Christian religion is, as its founder announced, that his disciples might have more abundant life, then the characteristic mark of his church must be an accession of spiritual vitality, an increase in insight and vision; and the apostolic succession which shall reproduce the Master's mission must be recognized under the most diverse forms of opinion about him, in the lives which have grown "up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

The history of the church of the Spirit thus approached may be lightly and cursorily traced. It does not demand erudite discussion of the theological controversies which have preoccupied and perplexed the learned. These heated debates,

significant as they may be of man's uncontrollable desire to know the Unknowable and to define the Infinite, illustrate the science of religion rather than religion itself; they represent the analysis of truth rather than the possession of it. As the scientific botanist gathers his flowers to dissect their desiccated parts, so, with the same devotion to his science, the theologian analyzes and classifies the elements of the religious life. Religious experience is, however, like the flowers of the field, a living and fragrant growth which may be submitted to analysis but in whose diversified vitality is its beauty and charm. The historian of the Spirit may therefore proceed by selection rather than by dissection, regardless of systematic continuity but noting the points of loveliest bloom in the garden of experience which invite the admiration of the beholder.[1]

A history of the spiritual tradition in Chris-

[1] More adequate and detailed accounts of the history of spiritual Christianity may be found in the comprehensive and sympathetic volumes of Professor Rufus M. Jones, "Studies in Mystical Religion," 1909; "Spiritual Reformers of the 16th and 17th Centuries," 1914; in the briefer but discerning studies of Dean Inge, "Christian Mysticism," 1899; "Studies of English Mystics," 1906; "Types of Christian Saintliness," 1915, and in the erudite and serene teaching of the Catholic mystic Baron von Hügel. "The Mystical Element of Religion," 1908-09; "Eternal Life," 1912. To all of these this chapter is much indebted. The painstaking work of George Matheson, "Growth of the Spirit of Christianity," 2 vols., 1877, does not completely justify its suggestive title.

tianity would, of course, begin by observing the characteristic teaching of Jesus himself; and nowhere has the issue been more clearly joined between the church of authority and the church of the Spirit. Indeed, it is one of the strangest paradoxes of history that a teacher so obviously and primarily concerned with quickening the consciousness of God in the individual soul, so manifestly transmitting to his disciples this supreme experience, and so undisguisedly in conflict with the hierarchies and orthodoxies of his time, should have become, to the vast majority of his followers, the founder of an institution and the author of a creed. The word "church" occurs but twice in the Gospels; once in the obvious sense of "congregation," and again in the much-debated commission to Peter. The mind of the Master was habitually set on a much more comprehensive and daring ideal. It was that dream of a spiritual fellowship of consecrated lives to which he gave the name, the Kingdom of God. More than fifty times this phrase, or the corresponding title, the Kingdom of Heaven, is reported from the lips of Jesus. With every variation of illustration and parable, and with constant reiteration of emphasis, he announces this glowing hope of spiritual unity. I must preach the kingdom of God, he says. "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." "The Kingdom of

heaven is at hand." It was a kingdom which should not come with observation. "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

How remote is this spiritual anticipation from the governmental and institutional intention of the church of authority! According to the teaching of Jesus, the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him; and when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide them into all truth. The church of authority, on the other hand, proposes the mediation of priests or the conformity to creeds as agents of the Holy Spirit, and fixes the direction of its guidance into all truth. Jesus says to his followers, "After this manner therefore pray ye," and offers them a form of petition which bears no trace of doctrinal apologetics, and in which, through all the succeeding centuries, all communions of Christians reverently join. The church of authority, on the other hand, invades the sanctity of worship with tests of conformity which Jesus himself could not have understood, and which, if the Sermon on the Mount holds the essentials of his religion, he might regard as remote from his supreme desire.

The contrast thus presented becomes even more impressive when one recalls how profoundly the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has become modified

in the course of Christian history. Nothing is more characteristic of the Fourth Gospel than this ideal of a progressive revelation. On this hope Jesus rests his claim to leadership. The Spirit of truth will guide into all truth. A continuous consciousness of the immanent Deity, an undiminished communion with the Father,—such is his supreme desire for those that shall be gathered in his name. From the Father to the Son, as the creeds with profound truth announce, is to proceed the Spirit of truth; and that procession of the Holy Spirit is perpetuated and amplified as the life of God reveals itself from age to age in the soul of man.

Nor bounds, nor clime, nor creed thou know'st,
Wide as our need thy favors fall;
The white wings of the Holy Ghost
Stoop, seen or unseen, o'er the heads of all.[18]

Differ as later generations have done, with heat and sometimes with hate, concerning the relation of Jesus to his Father and the cosmic claim which his mission represents, they are at one in welcoming his leadership of the spiritual life and his confident assurance; "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Nothing is heard in this spiritual teaching of metaphysical formulas or of subtle distinctions

[18] Whittier, "The Shadow and the Light."

of persons in the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is not a theological conception, but a guiding reality. The prayer of the Christian is that of the psalmist, "Take not thy holy spirit from me." The hope of the Christian is in what the Apostle Paul describes as the "Holy Spirit of promise." The life of the Christian is one that does not "grieve" the Holy Spirit of God. From such teaching has flowed through all the centuries a stream of spiritual vitality, often "subterranean" and "gushing up at intervals" through the formalism and intellectualism of each age, but always testifying to its source, and transmitting the water of life. If it can be affirmed that Jesus was the founder of a church, it was no other than the church of the Spirit.

If the historian of the church of the Spirit should proceed from the teaching of Jesus, with its marks of consistency and continuity, to that of the chief apostle of the Christian message, the scene would abruptly change from one of unclouded serenity to one of storm and stress. The spiritual life of Jesus developed from childhood to manhood as a harmonious whole. He "increased," it is written, "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." No violent transition marks his religious experience. Jesus was what modern psychologists call a once-born soul. Paul, on the other hand, is the classic ex-

ample of the twice-born. The whole horizon of his life was transformed by one great incident of contrition and surrender. Yet, by some strange perversion of his influence, he has become accepted in great areas of Christian thought as primarily concerned to teach a doctrinal system and a metaphysical theology. It is quite true that the great words of Christian doctrine—justification, predestination, propitiation—resound through his letters, and that as the centuries passed, Augustine and Calvin appropriated these daring speculations of Paul and derived from them the laws of God for the redemption of man.

Yet, sublime and subtle as Paul's metaphysics may be, there is behind and within this teaching another Paul, whose influence on unsophisticated readers has been far more profound. Paul's theology had, in fact, slight effect among his contemporaries, and it has plainly lost much of its impressiveness and vitality among the conditions of the modern world. But his passionate devotion to a new loyalty, the self-surrender with which he cries: "I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me;" the sanity and confidence of his discipleship: "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"; the spiritual mysticism and ethical passion which "gush up intermittently" through the hard surface of his reasonings, make the apostle, not a man of his own age

alone, but a teacher of the ages. Paulinism may have its day and cease to be; but Paul remains the most many-sided and, as he has been called, "prismatic" figure in the history of biography.[2] In him as in no other figure in history meet the conflicting characteristics of the system-maker and the seer, of the theologian and the mystic; and while the church of authority may turn to him to fortify its creeds and confessions, the plain multitude finds in him a convincing witness of the church of the Spirit.

At this point, where the spiritual tradition would seem to be safely established, both by the consistent leadership of Jesus and by the intermittent but controlling mysticism of Paul, the historian of the church of the Spirit is met by a surprising situation. Problems of administration or fellowship begin to preoccupy the scattered communities of Christians, and even to appear primary and fundamental. Organization begins to supplant inspiration, and an ecclesiastical system becomes the organ of the spiritual life. The Christian church was, in short, tempted to propose the same programme of domination and dictatorship which had become familiar in the imperialism of Rome; and, instead of recalling the saying of Jesus, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice," or Paul's great affirma-

[2] J. H. Ropes, "The Apostolic Age," 1906, p. 101.

tion, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," the church listened to the dictates of Ignatius: "Do ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles; and to the deacons pay respect, as to God's commandment." [3] "The Spirit spake on this wise: 'Do nothing without the bishop' ";[4] or to the sayings of Iraeneus concerning "the faith preached to men which comes down to our own time by means of the successions of the bishops." "It is a matter of necessity," he goes on to say, "that every church should agree with this church on account of its preëminent authority. . . . The apostles, like a rich man [depositing his money] in a bank, lodged in her hands [the church] most copiously, all things pertaining to the truth. . . . She is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers." [5]

Thus the spiritual tradition, instead of controlling the church, becomes at many points subordinated or arrested, and is likely to be more conspicuous among distrusted heretics than among the accredited defenders of the Christian church. Father Tyrrell, in reflecting on his own experience, cites Father Dolling as saying, "All great ameliorations have come through disobedience, and

[3] Ep. to Smyrn., viii.
[4] Ep. to Phil., vii.
[5] *Adv. Haereses,* Bk. III, ch. III, 2 and IV, 1.

not on orthodox lines";[6] and even if this verdict, wrung from him by sad experience of disillusion, be regarded as excessive, it is confirmed by many incidents in Christian history. The church of the Spirit represents much more than disobedience; but it has been developed, in large part and in many of its noblest types, "not on orthodox lines."

Such, for example, is the character of that genuine, though often undisciplined, revival of spiritual religion in the second century which is known as Montanism. Like the Apostle Paul in his moods of mystic insight, the Montanists claimed the gift of prophecy, and the right of intimate communion with God with no intervention of ecclesiastical authority. "Lo! Man is like a lyre," taught Montanus, "and I [the Spirit], like a plectrum, lightly touch him (*ceu plectrum volo*). Man sleeps. I watch. Lo! It is the Lord who renders insensible the heart of man (*corda hominum in stuporem vertit*) and gives a heart to men."[7]

Montanism was, as George Matheson pointed out, the Methodism of the second century, with

[6] "Autobiography and Life," 1912, Vol. I, p. 132.

[7] Epiphanius *Adv. Haereses,* Bk. II, ch. 48, in Migne, *Patrol. Graeca,* Vol. 41, p. 862. Or, more freely rendered by Weinel, "Die Wirkungen des Geistes u. der Geister," 1899, s. 92, "takes man's heart from his breast" (Menschenherzen aus der Brust nimmt).

the same extravagance of emotion which marked the onset of the modern movement, and the same direct obedience to the heavenly vision which made Methodism in the eighteenth century a heresy rather than a revival of the established church.[8] The judgment of Eusebius, an unfriendly critic, was, it is true, often justified: "Montanus," he reports, "was carried away in spirit and wrought up into a certain kind of frenzy . . . proclaiming what was contrary to the institutions that had prevailed in the church as handed down and preserved in succession from the earliest times." [9] The Montanists themselves took a more favorable view of these emotional excesses. They were evidences that their possessors were the spiritually-enlightened (πνευματικοί), as distinguished from the carnal church, (σαρκικοί). The illumination of the Holy Spirit was welcomed as a continuously communicated gift. It is not surprising that Tertullian, the most vigorous mind among Christians of the third century, found himself repelled by the moral laxity of the church of authority, and committed himself to this heresy which reaffirmed the life of the Spirit. "I call in a new testimony," he said, "yea, one that is better known than all literature, more discussed than all doctrine, more

[8] *Op. cit.*, I, p. 163.
[9] "Eccles. Hist.," Bk. V, Ch. XVI, 7.

public than all publications, greater than the whole man,—I mean all which is man's. Stand forth, O soul, whether thou art a divine and eternal substance, as most philosophers believe,—if it be so, thou wilt be the less likely to lie,—or whether thou art the very opposite of divine, because indeed a mortal thing, as Epicurus alone thinks . . . stand forth and give thy witness. . . . I want thine inexperience. . . . I demand of thee the things thou bringest with thee into man." [10] "Almost the greater part of mankind," he says in another place, "get their knowledge of God from visions." [11]

With the coming of the third century, Christian thought had established its contact with Greek philosophy, and the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus was offering to the satiated Roman mind its exalted mysticism. "Since the soul is so worthy of veneration, and divine," taught this master, "have faith that thou canst approach God by this way and ascend to Him. For thou shalt not wander far from Him, nor are there many things between." (*Neque enim es longius vagaturus nam neque sunt intermedia multa.*)[12] "[The divinity] is present wherever there is any

[10] "The Soul's Testimony" (*De testimonio animae*), Ante Nicene Fathers, III, Ch. I.

[11] "A Treatise on the Soul" (*De anima*), XLVII. (*Maior paene vis hominum e visionibus deum discunt.*)

[12] Ennead V. I, 3.

person who is capable of entering into contact therewith. It is absent only for those who cannot succeed therein." [13] "Such is the life of the gods," says Plotinus in his classic phrase, "and of divine and blessed men; detachment from all things here, contempt of earthly delights, and the flight of the alone to the Alone." "The soul is not in the body—nor is that the teaching of Plato, but the body is borne by the soul." (*Corpus in anima est advectum.*)[14] It was, in short, an absolute idealism, akin to that which finds its lyric expression in Spenser's "Hymn to Beauty":

> For of the soule the bodie form doth take,
> The soule is form, and doth the bodie make.[15]

This call to contemplative insight and clarified vision is at once a reminiscence of Plato and an anticipation of Emerson. The doctrine of the Over-Soul in the modern transcendentalist is in the main a restatement of the ancient mysticism. It is not the Egyptian but the New Englander who says of religious experience: "This communication is an influx of the Divine mind into

[13] Ennead VI, 9, 7, (*solum non potenti non adest*); Guthrie's tr. I, p. 161.

[14] Ennead VI, 9, 11, and III, 9, 2.

[15] Inge, "Christian Mysticism, 1899, p. 92 ff. "The Philosophy of Plotinus," 1918, Lectures VI, VII, VIII; *Cf.* Vol. I, p. 197: "The world of sense is created by the soul after the pattern shown her by Spirit. . . . There is nothing 'Yonder' which cannot be found 'Here'."

our mind. It is an ebb of the individual rivulet before the flowing surges of the sea of life. . . . Within man is the soul of the whole, the wise silence, the universal beauty, . . . the Eternal One. . . . The soul gives itself, alone, original, and pure, to the Lonely, Original, and Pure, who, on that condition, gladly inhabits, leads, and speaks through it." [16] Such a teaching may well have brought fresh assurance to many thoughtful Christians whose spiritual life was threatened by the formalism of the church. Neo-Platonism was the flickering torch of waning classicism, which touched the Christian tradition and kindled a new flame of faith and hope.

The most conspicuous instance of this adaptation of Platonism to Christianity is, of course, to be observed in the dramatic experience of St. Augustine. In him was reproduced not only much of the doctrinal teaching of the Apostle Paul, but, even more conspicuously, the same divided personality—now system-maker, now seer, now theologian, now mystic—which gave to the Apostle his complex character. "There were two men in this Doctor of the Church," Sabatier has said, "the son of Monica and the orthodox bishop, the man of the Spirit and the man of authority." [17] His most conspicuous achievement was external

[16] "Essay on the Over-Soul," ed. 1875, pp. 358, 364, 371.
[17] Sabatier, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

and architectural—the planning in elaborate outline of a City of God, within whose stupendous structure of protective sacraments and sheltering walls sinful men might find security and peace. "The Church," Harnack has said, "guaranteed the truth of the faith, where the individual could not perceive it. . . . Acts of faith were, at the same time, acts of obedience. . . . Augustine was the father of the conception of implicit faith (*fides implicita*), by associating with the individual believer the Church with which he believes and which believes for him." [18] "I should not believe the Gospel," said Augustine, "unless the authority of the Catholic Church determined me." [19] "The Augustinian theology made possible the rise of the papacy." [20]

Yet though this ecclesiastical statesmanship has been for many centuries the corner stone of a doctrinal system, it is not for this that devout minds of all communions have turned to St. Augustine as a spiritual guide. For one student who traces the vast outlines of his "City of God," a thousand have found their experiences of contrition and restoration interpreted by his "Confessions." The great words with which this pre-

[18] "History of Dogma," tr. 1898, V. 80, 81.

[19] *Contra Epist. Manichaei*, Ch. V. (*Ego vero evangelio non crederem nisi me catholicae ecclesiae commoveret auctoritas.*)

[20] Allen, "Continuity of Christian Thought," 1884, p. 4.

cious manual begins: "Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee"; [21] the reiterated self-reproach of the alienated mind: "Woe is me! how high art Thou in the highest and how deep in the deepest! and Thou never departest from us, and we scarcely return to Thee"; [22] the discovery of the way which "we enter not by ships or chariots or feet, no, nor by going so far as I had come from the house to that place where we were sitting; for not to go only, but to enter there, was naught else but to will to go," [23]—all this justifies Harnack in describing St. Augustine as "the psychological, because he was the theological genius of the Patristic period," and "the first modern man." [24] "When I read his Confessions," said Petrarch, "I think I read my own, for I find in them the history of my life. . . . Its restlessness and distraction, its fear of death, its hatred of vice, yet unequal progress in virtue and purity—from whence come all these things? They arise, replies Augustine, from your light and careless disposition. You perceive your errors, but you do not seek a better path to walk in." [25]

It is this sense of assurance and intimacy which

[21] "Confessions," Bk. I, Ch. 1.
[22] "Confessions," Bk. VIII, Ch. 3.
[23] "Confessions," Bk. VIII, Ch. 8.
[24] "History of Dogma," V. 109.
[25] Dobson, "Life of Petrarch," 1817, p. 149.

has reassured multitudes in all communions of the Christian church. Augustine, as Harnack concludes, is "the father, not only of the Catholic doctrine of grace, but also of that mysticism which was naturalized in the Catholic church down to the Council of Trent." [26] It is with Augustine as with his predecessor Paul; the subtle discriminations of his ecclesiastical imperialism strengthened the foundations of the church of authority; but his humble confessions of penitence and pardon have given him a more universal and permanent leadership in the church of the Spirit.

It is not surprising that a spiritual emancipation, such as both Paul and Augustine in their deeper moods attained, soon became to the church of authority unacceptable and even dangerous. A church which set before itself a scheme of imperial control was not likely to tolerate undisciplined piety. The Empire of Charlemagne had become a symbol of the vaster ambition of the papacy, and when at last the German Emperor knelt in the snow at Canossa before Hildebrand, and ecclesiastical rule became supreme, an age of dogmatic definition succeeded the ages of spiritual insight, and the church of the Spirit could survive only as a heresy or schism. In gaining the world, the church itself had been conquered by the world, and though the "subterranean

[26] "History of Dogma," V. 86, 106, 107, note.

stream" of its spiritual tradition "gushed up" intermittently, its emergence was more likely to occur among persecuted sects or rare individuals than in the imperialism of the church itself.

When, for example, in the twelfth century, Peter Waldo, the prosperous merchant of Lyons, recalling the stern summons of the Gospel: "If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me," committed himself to its literal obedience, gathering round him other generous souls to spread the message of this gospel of service, what could this lay-preaching and unauthorized benevolence seem to the luxury-loving church but an impertinence and affront? At a council in Verona, held in the presence of the Emperor (*Friderico I. imperatore praesente*), Pope Lucius III. exhausted the vocabulary of denunciation in condemning those who called themselves by the "false and presumptuous name of 'Humiliati'" (*tam falso nomine quam superbo mentiuntur*),[27] and pronounced a perpetual anathema on those who "do not fear to think and teach otherwise than as the Holy Roman Church prescribes and observes; and, in general, whomsoever the same Roman Church, or the special bishop of their own diocese . . . shall

[27] Labbe-Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova collectio,* Tom. XXII, Col. 493.

have declared heretical." [28] Thus the Waldensians, or "Poor Men of Lyons," with their kindly maxims of brotherly love and their revival of apostolic service, became repudiated as pestilent heretics, and were harried by the persistent and merciless persecutions of the apostolic church.

The same revival of spiritual religion which made the Waldensians heretics was soon to be proclaimed, with more dramatic utterance, within the limits of ecclesiastical rule; and to be greeted by the church of authority, not indeed with persecution, but with prudent and reluctant tolerance. The beautiful story of St. Francis of Assisi has become so precious a possession for all Christians, Catholics and Protestants alike, that it is difficult to believe how gradual and guarded was the approval of his contemporaries and superiors. The townspeople of Assisi derided him as a madman; his father, "bursting with shame and rage," disowned him, and Pope Innocent III., though receiving him graciously, "reserved his definitive approbation," and "consented to suspend judgment." The "Little Flowers" of his simple speech shed their fragrance in vain among the satiated churchmen of his time; and finally, as the concluding irony of his fate, a movement which was so completely personal and spiritual became by its very success incorporated as a new

[28] *Corpus iuris canonici*, 1881, II, Col. 780.

Order within the church of authority, and a great organization perpetuated the name, though by no means always the ideals, of its saintly founder. "He did not want to found an Order like the Monastic Orders; he wanted to bring back the *apostolic spirit,* and to have it propagate itself unhampered and unrestrained." [29]

There was a glad sanity in his teaching which was not easily maintained under the rigorous rule of a great establishment. "The servants of God," he said, "are really like jugglers, intended to revive the hearts of men and lead them into spiritual joy." [30] The rule of the order was to "rejoice in the Lord" (*Ostendunt se gaudentes in Domino*). "O Brother Leo," said their leader, "write, that it is in this that there is perfect joy . . . above all the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which Christ has given to his friends, is that of conquering oneself, and suffering willingly for the love of Christ all pain, ill-usage, opprobrium, and calamity: because of all the other gifts of God we can glory in none, seeing they are not ours, but God's." [31] It was sadly concluded by the Catholic modernist, Father Tyrrell, that "the only way to preserve the spirit of a founder from petrifaction is to let his work die with him; I

[29] R. M. Jones, "Studies in Mystical Religion," 1909, p. 163.
[30] P. Sabatier, "Life of St. Francis of Assisi," tr. Houghton, 1894, p. 307.
[31] "Little Flowers," miniature edition, p. 48.

should allow a Hecker to gather a band of fellow-spirits as long as he was alive to keep up the first fervor. After his death they should die out ruthlessly. All the misery comes from a mistaken loyalty to the letter of the founder's rule, which at last slays the spirit." [32]

The historian of the church of the Spirit will not find it necessary to trace in detail the dreary period of ecclesiasticism in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It will be sufficient for him to point out that the one ray of light which broke through that darkness shone in vain upon the established church and was barred out by papal decrees. It came from the effort of scholars and preachers to regain that direct communion of the soul with God which the hierarchy had admitted only through doctrinal conformity and sacramental rites.

The most influential of these mediæval mystics, the Dominican monk Eckhart, though professing complete loyalty to his church, and though wholly disinclined to controversy, applied himself to restore a spiritual confidence in the immanence of God, or, in his language, to revive

[32] "Autobiography and Life," 1912, Ch. II, p. 78. *Cf.* the sympathetic and beautiful sketch by G. K. Chesterton, in which this qualified approval of St. Francis is recognized and defended: "The saints were sometimes great men when the popes were small men, but . . . great men are sometimes wrong when small men are right." "St. Francis of Assisi," 1924, p. 221.

the "divine spark," by which "the body is so completely penetrated with divine light and with the soul essence which is of God that he can properly be called a divine man." [33] This pure and lofty mysticism, akin to the later faith in the "Inner Light" of the Society of Friends, could not escape the suspicion even of Eckhart's own Order, and in 1329 Pope John XXII. expressly condemned and reprobated the writings of Eckhart (*damnamus et reprobamus expresse*); pronouncing seventeen of his propositions heretical and eleven as having an ill sound (*male sonantes*), rash, and suspected of heresy.[34]

When one passes from the refined speculations of Eckhart to the practical preaching which he in large part inspired, the same conflict of experience with conformity is encountered. The serene idealism of the "Friends of God" found itself opposed by the determined obscurantism of the church of authority, and their summons to the soul appeared to endanger sacerdotal claims. Nothing in Christian literature has maintained its vitality more permanently than the writings and sayings of these mediæval mystics. The sermons of Tauler, the "Imitation of Christ" of Thomas à Kempis, and perhaps more than all,

[33] Pfeiffer, "Meister Eckhart," 1857, s. 128. (Cited by Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 223.)

[34] Denzinger, "Enchiridion Symbolorum," 1921, pp. 214-216.

the "Theologia Germanica," that "golden little treatise," as it was called by Henry More, still speak to the spiritual experience of lives for whom the dictates of the hierarchy have become meaningless or silent. "I will say," wrote Luther of this little manual, "though it be boasting of myself, and I speak as a fool, that next to the Bible and St. Augustine, no book hath ever come into my hands whence I have learnt, or would wish to learn, more of what God, and Christ, and man and all things are." [35]

"Children," said Tauler, "much talking does not do away with sin, and as I have often said, confessors have no power over sin. Commune with your own hearts and there confess your sins." [36] "God is ever ready," he says again, "but we are very unready; God is nigh to us, but we are far from him; God is within, we are without; God is at home, we are strangers." [37] The same message is delivered by Thomas à Kempis: "If thy heart were sincere and upright, then every creature would be unto thee a living mirror and a book of holy doctrine": [38] and again, "Let not Moses speak unto me or any

[35] "Theologia Germanica," tr. Winkworth, 1874, p. xix.

[36] "The Inner Way," being thirty-six sermons for festivals, by John Tauler; tr. Hutton, 1901, p. 318.

[37] "Sermon for Second Sunday in Advent," tr. Winkworth, 1857, p. 192.

[38] Book II, Ch. IV.

of the prophets; but rather do Thou speak, O Lord God, the inspirer and enlightener of all the prophets, for Thou alone without these canst perfectly instruct me, but they without thee can profit nothing." [39] Or yet again, "Surely, great words do not make a man holy and just, but a virtuous life maketh him dear to God. I had rather feel compunction than know the definition thereof." [40]

With still finer insight speaks the unknown author of the "Theologia Germanica": "Although it be good and profitable that we should ask, and learn and know, what good and holy men have wrought and suffered, and how God hath dealt with them, and what he hath wrought in and through them, yet it were a thousand times better that we should in ourselves learn and perceive and understand, who we are, how and what our life is, what God is and is doing in us, what he will have from us, and to what ends he will or will not make use of us." Such is the teaching which is summed up in the noble saying which might make a permanent motto for the church of the Spirit: "I would fain be to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man." [41]

[39] Book III, Ch. II. [40] Book I, Ch. I.

[41] "Theologia Germanica," tr. Winkworth, Ch. X. The same maxim recurs in Ch. LIV: "If a man attain thereunto, to be unto God as his hand is to a man, let him be therewith content, and not seek further."

These utterances of pure and personal consecration, without sacramental sanction or external authority, could find little welcome in the fourteenth century, when the lowest point of ecclesiastical degradation had been reached. The papal court, transferred in 1309 from Rome to Avignon, became for seventy years a vassal of France, and there ensued an era of worldly contention and interdicts, of rival popes and tortuous diplomacy, which could not but drive devout souls, even though they desired to remain within the bounds of conformity, into the open air of purer piety. The mediæval mystics have often been called "Reformers before the Reformation"; but they were in fact less concerned to reform doctrine than to realize discipleship. Their place is not among the theologians and philosophers of their time, but in the more comprehensive companionship of the church of the Spirit.

If the historian should proceed to the period of the Reformation, the same contrast of form with spirit, of dogma with life, would be met, and still remains to perplex and divide the communions of Protestantism. Luther, though he led a revolt from the established hierarchy, remained essentially within the church of authority, substituting the Bible for the church as his witness, and welcoming for the defense of the church the coöperation of the State. The Reformation as repre-

sented in Luther was, in Harnack's words, "in many respects, an old Catholic or even a mediæval phenomenon. . . . Luther was the restorer of the old dogma. . . . Luther would at any moment have defended, with fullest conviction, the opening words of the Athanasian Creed: 'Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith.'" [42] It was again the heretics who kept aflame the light of the Spirit. Wickliffe, in England, defined his religion as "following Christ according to the Gospel," and maintained that, "Any man following Christ is as much Christ's vicar as any other man";[43] but his teaching was condemned by not less than five papal bulls; his dead body was exhumed by order of the Council of Constance, burned to ashes, and thrown into a brook; so that, as Fuller says, "thus this brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wickliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over." [44]

When, again, the scholarly Bohemian Reformer John Hus protested against papal indulgences, and proclaimed a religion of the spirit, the same Coun-

[42] "History of Dogma," tr. 1899, VII. 169 ff.
[43] Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 356.
[44] Thos. Fuller, "Church History of Britain," Bk. IV, Sec. II, Par. 54.

cil of Constance, violating a safe conduct, sentenced him to death, and the blood of his martyrdom became the seed of a new church. Not less discredited by their contemporaries were the Swiss Reformers, who were given the opprobrious name of Anabaptists. Luther violently opposed them, as he, in his turn, had been condemned by Rome. Zwinglian Reformers, it has been justly said, "aimed to reform the old church by the Bible; the Anabaptists attempted to build a new church from the Bible." [45] Accredited Protestantism had become, not an abandonment of the principle of authority, but a change in its source. Yet through this Scriptural churchmanship, and indeed in Luther himself, "gushed up" at intervals the "subterranean stream" of spiritual faith. "The duty of a Christian man," said Zwingli, "is not to talk in a grand way of dogmas, but with God's help to do hard and great things." (*Christiani hominis est non de dogmatis magnifica loqui, sed cum deo ardua semper et magna facere.*)[46]

The history of Protestantism since the period of the Reformation records a similar series of determined efforts to enforce doctrinal conformity, and a not less reiterated revival of spiritual life. As John Robinson said in his farewell ser-

[45] P. Schaff, in *Baptist Quarterly Review,* Vol. XI, (1889), p. 266.

[46] Harnack, "History of Dogma," Vol. III, 274.

mon to the departing Pilgrims: "The Lutheran cannot be drawn to go beyond where Luther was; whatever part of His will God had revealed to Calvin they would rather die than embrace it; and the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man, who yet saw not all things." The renewal of the spiritual tradition might take the form of German Pietism or of English Methodism or of American Transcendentalism. Divergent as these spiritual movements were in their ways of expression, they were all directed to the common end of a fresh reality and catholicity. By various paths and under various guides, they all sought that freshness and fervor of conviction which the saints and mystics of the earlier church had attained, and which perpetuate the apostolic succession of the church of the Spirit.

No sooner had the Reformation fortified itself within the systems of Luther and Calvin than these strongholds were deserted by many earnest souls, who went out, like Abraham, not knowing whither they went, but seeking a city that had foundations. Puritanism, intolerant and severe as it often was, made its direct appeal to the individual conscience and the experience of the soul. It forfeited many pleasures, but it delighted in God. It created what has been called a hard church, but it saved England from

the fate of a soft church. Its theology might be arid and literal, but its religion sustained Cromwell, and inspired Milton and Bunyan. "In the things of the mind," said Cromwell, "we look for no compulsion but that of light and reason." "Give me liberty," said Milton, "to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties," [47] and he commends his young manhood

To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven;
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.[48]

Within the hard form of Protestantism lay the gentler spirit of the Plymouth Pilgrims, and the simplicity and integrity which have remained the best inheritance of the American character. The Covenant of the church at Plymouth, adopted in 1676, might serve as the permanent Confession of the church of the Spirit:

"We being by the most wise and good Providence of God brought together in this place . . . do hereby solemnly and religiously (as in His most holy presence) avouch the Lord Jehovah the only true God to be our God and doe promise and

[47] *Cf.* A. B. D. Alexander, "Shaping Forces of Modern Religious Thought," 1920, pp. 83, 84.

[48] "Sonnet on His Being Arrived to the Age of Twenty-three."

binde ourselves to walke in all our wayes, according to the Rule of the gospel—and in all sincere conformity to His holy ordinance—and in mutual love to, and watchfulness over one another —depending wholly and only upon the Lord our God to enable us by His grace thereunto."

The same story of rejection by the church of authority might be told of the Society of Friends. The first title which they accepted for themselves was that of "Seekers," or "Children of the Light," but they soon found a more modest and congenial name in their Master's saying, "I have called you friends." Thus the Quakers regarded themselves as called, not to organize a sect but to deliver a message. Determined in protest as they might be, rigid in discipline, even overwrought at times by intense emotion, beneath these evidences of profound experience was the vivid consciousness of God, the tranquillizing guidance of the inner light, and the faith in a Seed planted in the soul, which, if that soul silently surrendered itself to God, might reach fruition. Their sufficient confession was that of the psalmist: "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him." "As people," wrote George Fox, "come into subjection to the Spirit of God, and grow up into the image and power of the Almighty, they may receive the word of wisdom that opens all things, and come to know the hid-

den unity of the Eternal Being." Such intimacy with God made sacraments, clergy, and ritual superfluous or intrusive. Persecution or ridicule failed to bend the wills of those whom God had endowed with such serenity. The daystar had risen in their hearts and their way was plain. Fox himself endured not less than eight terms of imprisonment, "thrust into the dungeon among the rogues and felons." The Quakers, in a word, make one more link in that long chain of golden testimony to the sufficiency of the spiritual tradition; and, while their indifference to external forms has made them an insoluble paradox to the church of authority, they remain a permanent reassurance for all who would walk in the Spirit.

At the most varied, and often unexpected, points in the history of Protestantism, this stream of spiritual insight has refreshed the movement of the organized church, deepening its current, renewing fertility, and satisfying thirst. The teaching of John Wesley, for example, though it has become perpetuated in a great organization, was essentially, not so much an achievement of statesmanship, as a call to spiritual experience. Pious Moravians had communicated to him their fervor; a casual incident had lit the smouldering flame in his own life, so that he could write, "I felt my heart strangely warmed"; and from that

spark of conscious communion millions of souls have had their hearts "strangely warmed" as by the touch of a living Christ. "What is faith?" asks Wesley. "Not an opinion, neither any number of opinions put together, be they ever so true. It is the vision of the soul, the power by which spiritual things are apprehended, just as material things are ascertained by the physical senses." "It is," he says again, "the eye of the soul whereby the believer sees Him who is invisible. It is a perpetual revelation, . . . passing directly from God into the believing Soul." [49] "The church," he says again, "in the proper sense, the congregation of English believers, we do not weaken at all." [50] "Dr. Coke," he says again, "would tear all from top to bottom; I will not tear, but unstitch." [51]

An equally striking evidence of this same recall to experience is to be noted at the beginning of the nineteenth century in that teaching which gave new vitality to German theology. Friedrich Schleiermacher was so versatile a scholar, at once

[49] Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

[50] *London Quarterly Review,* Jan., 1924, p. 64.

[51] Cadman, "The Three Religious Leaders of Oxford," 1916, p. 370. *Cf.* the more cautious attitude of Charles Wesley, as reported by a hearer: "Abide in the Church. If you leave the Church, God will leave you, or you will go halting all the days of your life, should you even get to heaven at last; but abide in the good old Ship, and some on Boards and some on broken pieces of the Ship, you'll all get safe to land." (Cadman, p. 370.)

theologian, philosopher, and preacher, that in all these spheres of influence he has become generally recognized as creating a new epoch. When, however, the historian inquires for the original influence which moulded his later thought there is found beneath his doctrinal system and behind his administrative achievements the same spiritual experience which Wesley confessed. Schleiermacher had been trained as a youth in the gentle environment of Moravian piety. It was, he says, "the maternal womb" from which his religious life was born; and the immediate consciousness of God thus attained, not through reasoning or through action but through the emotional life, became the foundation of a new theology. "If you have only given attention to these dogmas and opinions," he says to the scholars of his time, "you do not yet know religion, and what you despise is not religion. . . . Why do you not observe the religious life itself, especially those pious exaltations of the mind in which all other known activities are set aside, . . . and the whole soul is dissolved in immediate feeling of the Infinite and Eternal?" "Your feeling is piety, in so far as it expresses the being and life common to you and to the All." [52] The same principle is announced with greater precision in the more academic form

[52] Sämmtl. Werke, 1843, Zur Theol. I. "Ueber die Religion," ss. 196, 160.

of Schleiermacher's later teaching: "The common element in all the varied expressions of religion, and that which distinguishes it from all other feelings—in a word, the essential nature of piety —is this, that we are conscious of an absolute dependence, or, in other words, conscious of relation to God." [53] On this sense of dependence his theological system rests. The task of the theologian is to interpret the experience of the soul. Proofs of God are inferences from the practice of the presence of God. The Christian consciousness recognizes the leadership of Christ. In a word, the great teacher who gave to German theology its new point of departure was at heart one more link in the apostolic succession of Christian mystics, and stands at the beginning of a new era as the legitimate successor of these saints and seers.

If one should turn from these historical reflections to observe the condition of the various Christian communions at the present time, he could not fail to see in them all the same issue which earlier centuries have witnessed between authority and experience. It may be in the protest of Catholic modernism, which the Roman hierarchy has so rigidly repressed but which so persistently strives to find room for modern criticism within the ancient order. It may be in the Protestant liberalism which the fundamentalist

[53] "Christliche Glaube," I, §4.

would eject, as though to justify the ironical comment of Erasmus that orthodoxy was becoming synonymous with ignorance. In either case, and in all communions, the two types of Christian discipleship appear,—separatism and comprehensiveness, denominational tenacity and spiritual affinity, ecclesiasticism and catholicity, the church of authority and the church of the Spirit.

Two voices are heard among evangelical Protestants; one affirming that "creedal subscription to ancient confessions of faith is a practice dangerous to the welfare of the church and to the integrity of the individual conscience";[54] the other prescribing the terms of conformity: "After all these months of discussion, who is there, within or without the Presbyterian Church, who knows more than he did two years ago what the special preacher, Dr. Fosdick, believes as to the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, His substitutionary atonement on Calvary for the sins of mankind, His resurrection from the dead on the third day in the same body in which He suffered, His ascension into heaven to make intercession for the sinners for whom He died, and His triumphant coming again to judge men and angels. These facts and doctrines are of the number of those which

[54] H. E. Fosdick (Letter to the Presbyterian Church, of withdrawal as Special Preacher, *Christian Century*, Oct. 16, 1924).

the Christian church has cherished, confessed, and defended from age to age." [55]

Or again, the same contrast may appear in churches under episcopal rule. On the one hand, a Lutheran archbishop declares: "One can find advantages and disadvantages in every form of Church organization. None is ideal. God has led us in different paths. Each has special experiences to preserve and make use of. Unity ought not to be uniformity. It would then be poorer." [56] On the other hand, an organ of Anglo-Catholicism defends exclusion; "We believe that the Church of England is part of the Catholic Church; that her divine mission has been hindered and impaired by the Lutheran heresies forced on her by the State, and that it will only be when she has entirely purged herself of these heresies that she will be permitted to win England back to the faith." [57]

Or yet again, it may be within the individual experience of a single soul, where loyalty to tradition and reverent association are confronted by the irrepressible conviction that these terms of fellowship fail to cover the real affinities of faith.

[55] C. E. Macartney, Moderator of Presbyterian Assembly, in *Christian Century*, Nov. 6, 1924.

[56] Söderblom, "Christian Fellowship," p. 120; as paraphrased by A. C. Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester, in his "The Church of England," 1924, p. 180.

[57] *Church Times*, July 11, 1924.

In all such instances the horizon of thought broadens as one rises to higher levels of fraternal confidence, and the area of fellowship stretches away into remote and even unfamiliar regions, where one sees, as from a serene height, the comprehensive unity of the church of the Spirit.

The impressions of contemporary thought thus generally stated may be still further confirmed if one considers more specifically that communion or association in which he has himself been trained, or in which he finds himself most at home. How is it, one asks himself, with my own religious life? Where is my real confidence set? Are the dictates of authority convincing and sufficient, or do I reach tranquillity of conscience and clarity of thought through conscious fellowship with the church of the Spirit? If one applies this test, for example, to the general movement known as Liberal Christianity, the result becomes impressive, and perhaps surprising.

The name "Liberal Christian" covers a great variety of opinions, in many Protestant communions, and is capable of many interpretations, either appreciative or condemnatory. To some critics a liberal Christian appears little else than an indifferentist or scorner. He is a liberal because liberated from restraining convictions. Liberty to him means license. He is like a vessel which has cut its mooring but has not spread its

sails, adrift on the ocean of time and a prey to its storms. Or again, one is sometimes called a liberal because, while holding opinions, he holds them loosely and lightly. He steers a course, but is without a port. Or yet again, one may fancy himself a liberal when he is in fact merely a dissenter; constitutionally with the minority, and priding himself on his non-conformity. Like Goethe's Mephistopheles, his is the spirit which persistently denies. This is what Burke called the dissidence of dissent and the protestantism of the Protestant religion.[58] "By Liberalism," said Cardinal Newman, "I mean false liberty of thought, or the exercise of thought upon matters in which, from the constitution of the human mind, thought cannot be brought to any successful issue. Liberalism then is the mistake of subjecting to human judgment those revealed doctrines which are in their nature beyond and independent of it, and of claiming to determine on intrinsic grounds the truth and value of propositions which rest for their reception simply on the external authority of the divine Word." [59]

All these failings or foibles may be observed among those who profess to be liberal Christians. What the Apostle calls the perfect law of liberty

[58] "On the Conciliation of America"; Works, (ed. 1865), II, p. 123.

[59] *Cf.* Inge, "Types of Christian Saintliness," 1915, p. 65.

may mean liberty through lawlessness. Liberal Christians may join those malcontents who segregate themselves as in a cave of Adullam, where, according to the Book of Samuel, all that were discontented gathered themselves. Finally, a liberal Christian is identified by many critics through his denials. He may deny the creed of Calvin, or the articles of Anglicanism, or the doctrine of eternal perdition; and these denials may seem the essence of his liberalism. A friendly bishop has lately said, with fraternal generosity, that fellowship with liberals might be attained if they would but abandon their denials.

These judgments of liberal Christianity are not without historical plausibility. Even so spiritually-minded a teacher as James Martineau, in reviewing his religious experience, remarks of his earlier period: "Steeped in empirical and necessarian moods of thought, I served out successive terms of willing captivity to Locke and Hartley, Bentham and James Mill," and he recalls the resulting personality as "a logical prig in which I am humbled to recognize myself." Here is the most obvious risk of liberal Christianity. What it has most to fear is that it shall actually be guilty of the failings thus ascribed to it, and shall degenerate into the character of a dissenting sect, to be recognized by its denials rather than its affirmations, an eddy in the great

stream of Christian history, revolving in its own narrow circle and gathering to itself floating fragments of reform, but missing the force of the main current. In other words, the besetting temptation of liberal Christianity is that of religious provincialism; the habit of mind appropriate to an attitude of protest rather than to the spirit of catholicity. No continuous enthusiasm can be anticipated when religious life segregates itself from the great movements of history or becomes self-defensive or apologetic. Provincialism is the refuge of small minds. Denominationalism is desiccated history. Liberal Christianity can have little influence or stability, if its liberty means neutrality, its freedom means laxity, or its faith is defined by enumerating the things that are not believed.

Such an interpretation of liberal Christianity, however, fails to appreciate another motive of this apparent alienation from prevailing creeds. The aim of liberal Christianity is in reality much more comprehensive than its protests or denials indicate. In its main intention it represents a recall to the simplicity which is in Christ, a restoration of the spiritual tradition, an allegiance to the church of the Spirit. Its faith is not to be defined by its denials but by its affirmations. It is, indeed, the denials of the church of authority which promote the affirmations of liberal Christianity.

The church of authority has often denied the spiritual democracy of the children of God, the right of approach to Him without mediation of priest or creed, the claim of the soul to be a partaker with the Divine nature, and the hope for the final restoration of the penitent sinner. Whenever the church of authority delegates its conscience to a priesthood, or commits its reason to a document, there is room for reaffirmation of the apostolic teaching that "the word of God is not bound."

The fundamental aim of liberal Christianity is thus the same which in all the centuries has expressed itself in successive phases of the church of the Spirit. In a much greater degree than many liberal Christians realize, liberal Christianity is a revolutionary movement; for it proposes nothing less than a complete subordination of the external organization of the Christian religion to a revival of its spiritual simplicity and power. Liberal Christianity makes the daring assertion that the Christian church, in great areas of its history, has been tempted to follow the wrong track; to assume as essential what is in fact incidental; to set definition before discipleship, speculation before inspiration, the letter before the spirit. "The liberal emphasis," one of the most undisguised and eloquent of American liberals has lately said, "rests upon experience;

we regard that, rather than mental formulas, as the permanent continuum of the Gospel." [60]

"Give Jesus and His Gospel a chance," another distinguished liberal Christian has said, "keep your theology in abeyance, keep your metaphysics in abeyance—if you have any—give the Gospel of Jesus a chance to bring into eminence, into sovereign distinctness, the everlasting, pathetic, tragic, sublime identities of human life." [61]

Liberal Christianity is thus essentially a movement to restore the spiritual tradition of the Christian religion, and to recover what a liberal Christian has called "the lost radiance of Christianity." Its fundamental affinities are not with the denials of sceptics or with the logic of rationalists, but with that "subterranean stream" of spiritual experience which this chapter has so imperfectly traced, and which through all the Christian centuries has borne witness to the apostolic suc-

[60] H. E. Fosdick, "The Modern Use of the Bible," 1924, p. 183. *Cf.* also the frank exposition by the same author, "What Christian Liberals Are Driving At," in *The Ladies' Home Journal,* Jan., 1925, p. 18 *ff*: "Liberalism is not a negative movement; it is a positive campaign to maintain vital religion. . . . (Its) aim is to put first things first in religion, to subordinate the details of ritual, creed, and church to the major objects of Christianity—the creation of personal character and social righteousness. At the very center of liberalism, as I understand it, is the conviction that nothing fundamentally matters in religion except those things which create private and public goodness."

[61] George A. Gordon, address on "Christianity and Racial Antipathies," Nov. 9, 1924.

cession of the holy catholic church, the church of the Spirit.

One form of evidence concerning this aspect of liberal Christianity is peculiarly impressive, because it is spontaneous and undesigned. It is the utterance of the religious life in lyric expressions of praise or prayer. Some ways of faith hardly admit of being translated into verse, and have made no important contribution to the history of Christian hymnology. Other forms of faith have borne as their fairest flower a fragrant efflorescence of sacred song. The heart of Methodism is revealed in the hymns of the Wesleys; the nature of evangelical piety in the hymns of Watts and Doddridge; the inner faith of the Moravians in their glowing hymns; while in the hymns of Keble and Newman is heard the characteristic note of the Anglican revival. "If a man," said Fletcher of Saltoun, "were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation." With equal justice it might be said that if a man were permitted to make the hymns of a church he need not care who should make its theology.

Tried by this test, the evidence of liberal Christianity is unquestionable. A movement which has often been condemned as one of unimpassioned intellectualism has expressed itself in hymns of singular freshness and spirituality, as though to

justify the conclusion of Martineau that there is a "close affinity, perhaps ultimate identity, of religion and poetry." [62] It cannot be an accident that the lyrics of Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Bryant, and Emerson proceed from lives bred in the rational piety of liberal Christianity; or that their sympathetic contemporary, Whittier, found in his Quaker faith a living spring of flowing verse.

The same lyric note has been touched by a group of less conspicuous hymn writers,—Chadwick, Gannett, Hosmer, Jones Very, Eliza Scudder, and others,—who might find scant welcome in many communions where their hymns are gladly sung, but whose verses make the most important contribution of America to the literature of hymnology. Many a mourner has been tranquillized by Hosmer's

> I cannot think of them as dead
> Who walk with me no more;
> Along the path of life I tread
> They have but gone before;

or by Samuel Longfellow's

> I look to Thee in every need
> And never look in vain,
> I feel Thy strong and tender love,
> And all is well again.

Many a worshipping congregation utters its aspiration in Sarah Flower Adams's, "Nearer, my

[62] "Endeavours After the Christian Life," 1867, p. xii.

God, to Thee"; many a Christian festival is enriched by the "Calm on the listening ear of night," and "It came upon the midnight clear," of Edmund Hamilton Sears. These liberal Christian hymn-writers might be ineligible for membership in the church of authority, but their spiritual insight and vivid imagery break through the barriers of doctrinal agreement and lift Christian worship on the wings of song.

The same conclusion may be reached if one proceeds, finally, to examine the history and character of any single communion claiming with others the title of liberal Christians; and the survey attempted in this chapter, which has ranged so widely and cursorily across the great spaces of history, may not inappropriately close by considering a specific and comparatively inconspicuous type. The contrast which has been traced on a large scale throughout Christian history, between doctrinal dissent and spiritual tradition, between institutionalism and catholicity, may, for example, be illustrated by the history of that small group of churches which accepts the name of Unitarian. Their doctrinal position has made them an object of peculiar aversion to the church of authority; for the name Unitarian implies that the majestic conception of the unity of God precludes the acceptance of the Trinitarian formula, and as-

sumes that Jesus, however convincing and supreme a leader he became, was essentially a human being, through whom, rather than to whom, prayer should be offered. As a consequence of this doctrinal dissent, the Unitarian communion has often appeared to the church of authority to be outside the bounds of fellowship, and with no right to the name of Christian; and it must be admitted that, if the essential nature of Christian discipleship is to be found in conformity to an established definition of the being of God, this exclusion is not without justification.

Still further, it must be acknowledged that Unitarians, through their intellectual inheritance from English deists and rationalists, have often exhibited an unimpassioned faith, concerned with ethics rather than with emotion and cherishing the tradition of intellectual liberty. Such is one aspect of any organization which is committed to open-mindedness, and is alert for fresh discoveries of truth. In the "mighty army" of the Christian church one cannot expect the same uniformity of line and touch of elbows among the scouts or on the skirmish line as in the main body of troops. One must choose between a faith that is entrenched in the past and a faith that is advancing to the future; between stability and mobility; between the conviction that revelation has

ceased and the expectancy with which one looks, as John Robinson said, to see more light and truth break out of God's holy word.

These criticisms of the Unitarians do not, however, take account of another and not less significant fact which this group of churches, in common with other types of liberal Christianity, illustrates. It is quite true that one reason for their corporate existence is to be found in an emphasis on the humanity of Jesus. "The imitableness of Christ's character" was the title of one of Channing's noblest discourses: "He never held himself up as an inimitable and unapproachable being. . . . He always invited men to believe on and adhere to Him that they might receive that very spirit . . . by which He was Himself actuated. 'Follow me' is his lesson." This imitableness of Christ involved, still further, a conception of human nature in sharp contrast with the prevailing teaching of depravity and helplessness. One sublime idea, Channing wrote, had taken possession of his mind: "This is the greatness of the soul, its divinity, its union with God,—not by passive dependence, but by spiritual likeness,—its receptiveness of his spirit, its self-forming power." [63] This interpretation of the nature of God and man played a dominant part in the formative period of the Unitarian movement, and has been not

[63] Chadwick, "W. E. Channing," 1903, p. 246.

without influence in mitigating the theology and elevating the anthropology of the church of authority.

Yet even these high thoughts of the benevolence of God and the dignity of human nature do not represent the entire tradition which the Unitarians inherit. They are, in fact, no longer primarily concerned with a Christological controversy. It is not probable that any treatise or sermon in opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity has been written or preached by a Unitarian for many years. The ideal which their leading representatives, Channing and Martineau, cherished was of quite another character. It was the ideal of catholicity, the conception of a comprehensive church, free from theological controversy and committed to the spiritual tradition of the Christian life. It was, in a word, the same ideal which through many centuries has inspired and perpetuated the church of the Spirit. The small group of Unitarians contains, like all religious communions, advocates of the closer bond as well as prophets of the larger hope, institutionalists as well as mystics, minds constitutionally inclined to dissent as well as minds primarily concerned with inclusiveness; but the spiritual tradition of this fellowship is sufficiently summarized in the words of a living preacher: "The great word of religion today is the word, not of

Protestantism; it is the word of Catholicity, a world-wide thing, a mighty triumphant thing; and we as Liberals need . . . to take our place manfully as leaders in that catholicism, vaster in its sweep and more practical than that which Hildebrand ever dreamt of. The great word of the ancient creed given to us Liberals, and given to us because we are Liberals, is: 'We believe in the Holy Catholic Church.' " [64]

Nor is this larger aim a modern discovery. It was not less distinctly recognized in the earliest days of Unitarian history. In the sixteenth century, for example, the Italian scholar Lelio Sozzini, born of "a lineage of patrician jurists," in Siena,[65] set forth on a journey of inquiry to the countries lately won by Protestantism, meeting and conferring with Melancthon and his friends, and impressing them as so gracious a gentleman that one of these new acquaintances wrote: "He seems to have been gifted by Providence rather than by fortune (*non temere, sed fato*) with the name of Lælius." His conception of Christ, however, soon marked him as a heretic. Jesus was to him *"nostro dolce crocifisso,"* and *"nostro precursore."* Calvin rejected him; the inquisition

[64] Address by S. M. Crothers on "The Sympathy of Religions," in "Liberal Religious Thought at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century," 1901, p. 31.

[65] *Cf.* the erudite and conclusive studies of Alexander Gordon in *Theological Review,* London, 1879, July and Oct.

seized on his patrimony; and he died at the age of thirty-seven, in 1562.

His nephew Fausto Sozzini, *"praeclari ingenii juvenis,"* a less spiritually minded but more aggressive disputant, migrated in his turn from Siena to Northern Europe, and by his vigorous writings so reënforced the anti-Trinitarian tendency that the name Socinian became generally accepted. Persecution and exile soon became the tragic fate of the Unitarians in Poland; but their faith was revived under the more tolerant rule of Transylvania, where their modest fellowship is still, under hard conditions of destitution and confiscation, loyally maintained.

Neither Lelio nor Fausto Sozzini was primarily concerned to organize a protesting sect. Lelio expressly disclaimed that intention, affirming: *"Nulli sectae sum penitus addictus,"* and cherishing the hope that Calvinists, Arians, and those of his own way of thinking, might freely make common cause and constitute a national church. The only name which he would accept was that of Christian, and his immediate followers strictly adhered to his practice. Thus the same twofold character which may be observed in many Protestant communions has marked the history of Unitarianism. It has become a denomination, tenacious of its rights and proud of its inheritance; but from the beginning the impulse to or-

ganization has been supplemented by the ideal of catholicity. The Polish followers of Sozzini proclaimed themselves a "Society of Catholic Christians commonly known as Unitarians," (*Coetus Christianorum Catholicorum quos Unitarios vocant*), and in 1762 the Unitarians of Transylvania issued their Confession of Faith, defining themselves as "exiles of Christ, who prefer to be called only by his most sacred name, as Christians." (*Confessio Fidei Exilum Christi, qui ab ejus sanctissimo nomine Christiani tantum appellari amant.*)

The historical roots of this communion lie, therefore, much deeper than in the soil of a sect. The migrations and martyrdoms of its ancestors, though they may seem merely the vicissitudes of heretics, represent, in fact, one more attempt to simplify religious experience and to claim the name of Christian for all who have the mind of Christ. Many years ago, the saintly and learned German professor Tholuck was walking in his garden with a young American student who confessed himself a Unitarian. "Ah," said the great scholar, "the Unitarians, they are mystics." It was the evidence of an insight which many Unitarians have failed to attain. The strain of ethical and intellectual protest which they inherit has been reenforced by much experience of controversy and exclusion; but Tholuck's judgment was

historically sound. The natural affinity of the Unitarians is with that long series of witnesses to immediate communion with God which unites the mystics of all the centuries in spiritual fellowship.

It is this spiritual tradition which has inclined Unitarians throughout their history to be less concerned than are many communions with denominational growth. Loyal as they may be to their convictions, their generosity has been quite as lavishly bestowed on causes and movements which are more inclusive than their organization. A Unitarian congregation is quite as likely to represent the interests of public service and of private benevolence as the maintenance of a separatist creed. Thus while their faith has often been condemned as heresy, their works have not less often compelled commendation. They maintain their distinctive tenets and fortify their denominational institutions; but, as in the days of Sozzini, they remain "exiles of Christ, who prefer to be called only by his most sacred name, as Christians." As their ancestors endured persecution for the sake of an unembarrassed faith in a fatherly God and a brotherly Christ, so their congregations today may join in the great confession, "I believe in the holy catholic church," and with humility, but with confidence, accept their modest part in promoting and perpetuating the church of the Spirit.

CHAPTER III

THE SINS OF THE CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT

If the illustrations briefly cited from Christian history may offer some reassurance and companionship to one who would walk in the Spirit, what shall be said of the hindrances which may meet him on his way? There are, of course, many hindrances, of open sin or hidden shame, which confront all sorts and conditions of men, and block all ways which lead to the religious life; but these universal obliquities need not be recounted, nor need the ways of release from them be described. There remain, however, certain tendencies or failings which are peculiar to religious experience itself, or which are at least most conspicuous in that sheltered region. They seem to grow out of its special conditions, and even out of its very nature, as a plant under certain circumstances may encounter a peculiar blight or become susceptible to special parasites. These sins of religious experience are more subtle and refined than the gross offenses of immorality. Indeed, they should perhaps not be defined as sins, but rather as perversions of excellence, like unfruitful or

crooked growths in nature, which should be lopped off as deformities or obstructions.

What, then, are these special inclinations or temptations which may thus obstruct or blight the growth of the church of the Spirit? What has religious experience most to fear as its peculiar weaknesses or its besetting sins? The answer to these questions may be approached by considering the parallel case of the church of authority,—that great organization of doctrine and ritual which is generally regarded as representing the continuous life of the Christian church. Postponing for the moment the question of external enemies against which the church militant must fight, what, one may ask himself, is the internal danger which it has to encounter, and against what sins does it utter its most violent anathemas?

A sufficient reply to these questions is given by the official pronouncements of the church of authority. The internal danger which it is most concerned to eradicate is that of nonconformity. Having established its fixed standard of faith, or received its conclusive revelation, the most precious obligation of the guardian of this treasure must be to safeguard the deposit of truth left in its hands. Assent to authorized dogma becomes the first condition of discipleship. "Whosoever will be saved," says the Athanasian Creed, "before all things, it is necessary that he hold the

Catholic faith, which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." The Nicene Creed, according to the Council of Trent, is "that principle wherein all who profess the faith of Christ necessarily agree." The Westminster Confession announces that "It pleased the Lord at sundry times to reveal Himself, and afterwards to commit the same wholly unto writing; those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased." Thus a confession of doubt or denial is likely to appear the most insidious of sins. "From false doctrine, heresy, and schism, good Lord deliver us," is the prayer of Anglican worship. To withdraw any part of the fund of truth from the church which is its trustee and apply it to other uses is, as a representative of the church of authority has said, an act of theft, like the robbing of a bank, appropriating what is not one's own. "The only recognized sphere of the Spirit's action," a distinguished Anglican has unqualifiedly claimed, "is the Church of believers in Jesus as the Christ and Lord"; and this church is represented by "a priestly ministry appointed to teach and safeguard divine mysteries. . . . The natural starting point for religious belief is authority. . . . Christianity from the beginning was the religion of a sacramental church." [1]

[1] Gore, "The Holy Spirit and the Church," Ch. IV.

"If in the canonical books," announced a Lutheran authority of the sixteenth century, "anything has come from a human being, and not from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the certitude and stability of the entire Scriptures would be imperilled, its full divine authority would be destroyed, and our whole faith would become insecure." [2]

At this point, the most submissive of ecclesiastics and the most rigid of Protestants are at one. Either in the church or in the Scriptures there is established a final court of appeal; and false doctrine, heresy, and schism are to be expelled, either by a priestly ministry or by Scriptural proof. Sacerdotalists and fundamentalists agree in this appeal for conformity. Genesis must dictate geology, creationism displace evolutionism, Biblical criticism submit to the authority of church or book. Intellectual and scientific progress may even appear a hindrance to the Christian religion, and the church of authority become a determined antagonist of the church of the Spirit.[3]

[2] Quenstedt (cited by A. Sabatier, *op. cit.*, p. 176).

[3] The issue has been of late made singularly clear in the dramatic masterpiece of Bernard Shaw. What makes the martyrdom of St. Joan as certain to occur as is the climax of a Greek tragedy is the fundamental conflict between a religion which is superimposed and a religion which is experienced; between the voice of the church and the "voices" of the guardian saints. Given a deliverance of external

When one contrasts these belated and fruitless controversies which still preoccupy so many conscientious lives with the habit of mind promoted by the spiritual tradition of Christianity, it is as if one passed from a campaign of ignorant armies clashing in the dark to a scene of disarmament, or at least of armistice. The church of the Spirit has its own weaknesses and sins to meet, but they are of a wholly different nature from the heresies and schisms which threaten the stability or progress of the church of authority. As the spirit lies within the form of flesh, so religious experience lies within the forms of its expression; and problems of external conformity, important as they may be for organized efficiency, become secondary and contributory to the inner life of the soul.

The sins of the spirit are, therefore, not to be sought in theological errors or misdirected metaphysics, but in moral delinquencies and spiritual defection. Much which the church of authority has regarded as essential to faith becomes subordinate or incidental. Differences of opinion about God and Christ and human nature

infallibility to which experience must submit, and the verdict of the inquisition was inevitable. Given, on the other hand, a conscious practice of the presence of God among the decisions of daily life, and Joan could not yield. The church of authority was confronted by the testimony of experience, and in the end found itself moved to canonize the Maid whom it had burned.

must be anticipated; varied interpretations may be signs of progress rather than of decline in faith; the church and the Bible may become witnesses, rather than sources, of discipleship. But concerning the practice of the presence of God, with all its consequences of self-discipline, the teaching of the church of the Spirit is explicit and undisguised. Faith becomes, not an assent of the mind to propositions but an ascent of the will to God. "We walk by faith," said the Apostle Paul. Faith, that is to say, is not a way of talking, but a way of walking. The opposite of faith is not infidelity but faithlessness. Unbelief is not uncertainty but disloyalty, or, as the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "departing from the living God." To the church of the Spirit, the sin which is beyond forgiveness is not inaccuracy of doctrine but apostasy of life. To see the light and turn from it; to know the good and call it evil,—that, as Jesus said, is the sin against the Holy Ghost, which "shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in that which is to come."

If, then, this revolutionary transition from external obligation to spiritual privilege marks, in all the Christian centuries, the church of the Spirit; if conformity is less essential than consecration, and creeds are but the changing vesture of faith, what are the sins which remain to confront this inner life and tempt it to surren-

der the spirit to the letter and the faith to the form?

The first of such failings is what may be called spiritual illiteracy. The phrase is by no means to be confounded with ignorance of history or literature, or with lack of erudition. A spiritually illiterate person may be a diligent student, and even a profound scholar. What he lacks is susceptibility to spiritual influences and insight for spiritual realities. He may contend for the faith once delivered to the saints without appropriating the faith which made them saints. He may know much about religion without having much religion of his own. He may be learned in the letter and illiterate in the spirit. He may be so preoccupied as a theologian with the proofs of God that he overlooks the evidence of his own religious life. "He who professes to stand outside religion," the preface of a very notable translation has lately said, "and view all the religions of the world in impartial detachment will never wholly understand any one of them." [4]

The clarification of thought, the reasonableness and restraint, which are essential to a modern creed are to be attained, not by spiritual neutrality but by spiritual sympathy. A rational theology is the normal product of a genuine religious experience, and the vigor of the intellectual growth is

[4] Otto, "The Idea of the Holy," tr. Harvey, 1923, p. xv.

evidence of depth in the spiritual root. It is not an accident that the most versatile and influential theologian of the nineteenth century constructed his entire system on the foundation of absolute dependence upon God. His faith did not follow from his system, but created it. Doing the will, he came to know the doctrine.

The same preliminary demand for spiritual insight is met when one turns from dogmas to denials. Many a critic has proposed the complete abolition of the religious sentiment and has fancied that by irresistible logic he has wrecked the structure of Christian faith, when in fact he has not even discovered where the strength of that faith resides, or realized that many of its outposts may be reduced without a surrender of the fortress itself. To degrade the Bible into a book of oracles, to abdicate intelligence in the name of theology, to believe the impossible in the name of faith, or, on the other hand, to ignore the spiritual evidences of faith, and believe oneself scientific when one is only insensitive,—these are marks of a spiritual illiteracy which can be outgrown by nothing less than the spiritual education of the individual soul.

The church of the Spirit, in other words, assumes in its members a personal training in spiritual-mindedness. Religious education, now so seriously promoted, may have many contributory de-

partments of information and illustration, and may utilize all the historical and theological resources of the church of authority; but its final objective is the culture of the religious sentiment, the awakening of religious responsiveness, the development of spiritual-mindedness, the outgrowing of spiritual illiteracy. What the church of the Spirit has to fear is the neglect of its own possessions, the decline of spirituality, the hardening of the spiritual arteries, the ossification of the soul. Religious education, as its name would seem to imply, is education in religion. Its authority proceeds from its inspiration. Its material is not the chronology or archæology of the New Testament, but the faith of the New Testament. The hymns of the church may speak to the instincts of childhood more appealingly than the creeds of the church. The simplicity which is in Christ may be more convincing than the dogmas about Christ. Education in religion accepts the maxim of Jesus as its trustworthy guide: "Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

When one reviews the catechisms through which childhood has been for the most part inducted into the essentials of the Christian life, it is startling to observe how largely they have been concerned, not with this training of religious responsiveness, but with the inculcation of doc-

trines or the memorizing of creeds, a large portion of which neither teacher nor pupil could understand, and which, even if understood, would not assure to the child the elements of the Christian character. "What is it necessary for a Christian to believe?" asks the Heidelberg Catechism, and answers, "All that is promised us in the Gospel, which the articles of our catholic undoubted Christian faith teach us in sum." Thereupon, follow these "articles" as presented in the Apostles' Creed. "What doth God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?" asks the Westminster Catechism, and answers, "To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption," and these outward means are indicated as "his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer." "What did your godfathers and godmothers for you?" asks the Anglican Catechism, and answers, in more comprehensive phrase, "They did promise and vow three things in my name: First, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, that I should believe all the articles of the Christian faith. And, thirdly,

that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life." Thereupon, the catechism proceeds to ask, "Rehearse the articles of thy belief," and the young postulant repeats the Apostles' Creed. To fortify thus the outposts of conformity and leave unguarded the citadel of consecration; to confuse religious education with the acceptance of "articles," or "outward means"; to build the walls of Christology, and leave the Christian character outside,—these, even if they be endorsed by the traditions and learning of centuries, are in fact sins of spiritual illiteracy, which the church of the Spirit is called to supplant by spiritual responsiveness and religious insight.

More subtle than spiritual illiteracy is a second internal weakness which tempts the church of the Spirit. It is the sin of spiritual complacency. The consciousness of God and of His care may become so illuminating and satisfying that it seems to set its happy possessor apart from ordinary life, with an elevation and horizon of superiority. The three disciples of Jesus who went with him up the Mount wished to remain with their Lord above the level of the common crowd, on the height of open vision. The noisy throng at the mountain's foot and the cry of the demoniac boy interrupted their beatific meditation. Religious experience is in frequent peril of such self-

complacency. While the church of authority convicts its followers of sin and requires their repentance, the church of the Spirit assures the soul of its high destiny; and this restoration of courage, hope and joy may bring with it a sense of self-conscious virtue which is itself a vice. The satire of George Canning was launched against uncharitable candor:

But of all plagues, good Heaven, thy wrath can send,
Save, save, oh, save me from the Candid Friend!

Might not a similar petition be added for deliverance from what one might call:

. . . virtue's final taint,
The condescension of the conscious saint.

In some of the mediæval paintings of the Last Judgment one sees the saints ranged over against the sinners, and the contrast of serene blessedness with exquisite torture offers a dramatic opportunity for the artist's skill; but if one look through the splendor of color and the gleam of halos to the characters portrayed one may be struck by the complacent satisfaction which marks the countenance of the shining ones. How calmly they survey the woes of the wicked, their wings folded, their placidity undisturbed. "We are the beatified," they seem to say, "and we know it! Not even the sufferings of the damned can rob us of our bliss." A similar temptation to self-com-

placency may threaten the cheerful and sunny faith of the modern liberal. He has escaped from the bondage of authority and the restraints of archaic creeds. "The progress of man," he repeats, "is onward and upward forever." He faces towards the light; the beauty and goodness which he sees in the universe make him ready to join in the lyric of the optimist:

> God's in His heaven:
> All's right with the world.

It is a blessed faith to hold, banishing morbid self-distrust, fortifying cheerfulness, quick with social service, but it may easily lack humility, reverence, and contrition. The sense of sin, which has played so great a part in Christian teaching, has often distorted character and promoted insincere self-abasement; but it has also saved its confessors from the opposite sin of self-complacency. Dean Inge is probably justified in remarking that he regards the "defective sense of sin as the chief flaw of liberal Christians."[5] The consciously rational and righteous life is still tempted to say with the Pharisee, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers"; but the welcome of God still waits for the more searching confession, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" To

[5] "Types of Christian Saintliness," 1915, p. 75.

train the modern world in a freedom which is reverent and in a hope which is humble, still remains the task of the church of the Spirit.

Among the temptations which solicit the emancipated and unfettered life there is another which has a peculiar persuasiveness. It is the sin of spiritual indolence. The grace of God may seem to be so freely given; the universe may look so beneficent and God so near to man, that the way of faith may appear easy, and the tension of spiritual effort be correspondingly relaxed. Religion so generously offered may be indolently received, as though thrown into idle hands and held in easy grasp. In quite another connection, Lowell wrote:

> 'Tis heaven alone that is given away;
> 'Tis only God may be had for the asking.

But it may happen that as one attains the habit of a tranquil and unruffled piety, he may regard the struggles of repentant souls as exaggerated or fictitious, and expect heaven to be a gift of God to be had without even the asking. To "get religion," according to the tradition of some Protestant communions, is to undergo a tragic experience of remorse and repentance, a wrestling with God's messengers and a refusal to let them go without a blessing. No such cataclysmic experience is demanded by the church of the Spirit.

Religion arrives as a normal experience, growing as nature grows, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn. The church of the Spirit welcomes this tradition of serenity and sanity; and those who have detached themselves from the authority of priests and creeds often look back as on a nightmare to the strain of emotion from which they have been delivered.

Yet this sense of tranquil assurance may bring with it a peculiar peril. One of the gravest misapprehensions of religious experience is to conceive it as easy to attain, and to forget the apostolic counsel that one should endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The spiritual life is never safe from the attacks of the world and the flesh. Human nature is designed for conflict rather than for rest; for hardness rather than for softness. Precisely as in the physical world all motion is attained by overcoming the resisting force of friction, so in the life of the Spirit progress is made by the conquest of obstacles and the overcoming of resistance. "He that overcometh," it is written, "shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

It is at this point that one realizes the significance of the cross of Jesus Christ, which the church of authority has always regarded as the central fact of history. Out of the sufferings

and sacrifices which have so large a part in determining human life, all generations of Christians have turned to that cross as the interpreter of suffering and the symbol of sacrifice. In it has been found an object of adoration, a source of authority, a summons to surrender. Jesus, the Apostle Paul wrote, blotted out the handwriting of ordinances, nailing it to his cross. It was not from a reactionary ecclesiastic, but from an English Unitarian, that the lyric confession came:

> In the cross of Christ I glory,
> Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
> All the light of sacred story
> Gathers round its head sublime.

Yet this concentration of conviction on a single incident of the life of Jesus may fail to do justice either to the cross itself or to the ministry of Jesus. The doctrine of the cross of Christ has, it is true, enriched the Christian religion with a quality of self-effacing sacrifice which the modern world needs to recover and apply. Human life is no soft experience, but a hazardous occupation, a venture of faith; and no interpretation of its experience can be adequate which does not revive the truth of vicarious suffering as typified in the cross of Jesus Christ. It is not surprising that the motive which has driven great numbers of souls to the foot of that cross has been the elementary impulse of fear,—fear of the just penal-

ties of sin, before which trembling souls fly for safety. Smitten with a sense of their helplessness, they join with profound sincerity in the confession of dependence: "Other refuge have I none; hangs my helpless soul on Thee"; "Nothing in my hands I bring; simply to Thy Cross I cling."

Yet the lesson of that cross is but imperfectly learned if it be accepted as the symbol of suffering only, and its message be welcomed by none but helpless souls. The normal attitude of a modern life, however repentant of its sins it may be, is more erect than this helpless clinging. The cross of Christ is a symbol of victory rather than of defeat, of heroism rather than of helplessness. Its appeal is not so much to fear as to courage; not only to the confession that Christ has suffered for us, but to the pledge that His sufferings shall be "effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer." The call of Jesus to his followers is to bear their own crosses: "He that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me." "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." What the world needs at the present time, both in its thinking and in its conduct, is not so much fear of consequences, as defiance of consequences; and of this victory through sacrifice, and this self-discovery through self-surrender, the cross of Christ remains the supreme

symbol. "In this sign conquer," said the Cross to Constantine; though it would have been better for the world if he had read the message, not "Conquer thine enemies," but "Conquer thyself." The self-distrustful or defeated life lifts its eyes to the cross, and finds its courage fortified and its sacrifice a joy.

> He leads me through no darker rooms
> Than he went through before,

is the grateful response of brave discipleship to the message of the cross.

In other words, the chief reason why religion so often fails to win loyalty is that it makes such slight appeal to heroism. If anything is obvious in the condition of the public mind at the present time, and especially in the mind of youth, it is an extraordinary receptiveness to rational religion, not made easy enough to satisfy spiritual indolence, but made hard enough to demand what St. Ignatius Loyola called spiritual athletics. The serious problems which now confront the religious life demand, not intellectual submission but ethical daring. "Now abide three perils of liberalism," Professor Fosdick has lately said, "irreverence, sentimentality, and ethical disloyalty to Jesus —and the greatest of these is ethical disloyalty to Jesus." [6] Spiritual indolence may find a place

[6] "Modern Use of the Bible," 1924, p. 206.

for itself under the protection of an authoritative church, where thinking is done for one and conformity becomes an insurance for two worlds; but the risks of faith, like the risks of life, are a challenge to ethical loyalty. To make religion easy is to misinterpret the finest impulses of modern youth; to ask more of character than it has known it could give; to overcome spiritual indolence by spiritual initiative; to take religion, not casually and intermittently, but thoughtfully and continuously; to practice the presence of God as a form of spiritual athletics; to take up one's own cross and carry it; to find one's self in losing one's self;—that is the exhilarating summons of the church of the Spirit to the modern world.

There remains one other fault which easily besets those who would maintain the spiritual tradition, as indeed it tempts all ardent believers in a great cause. It is the sin of spiritual intolerance. To find a way of life which opens into freedom and power is so exhilarating an experience that one must long to share it with others; and soon that way may appear the only way to go. It is as though the approach to God were by a one-way street, where the theologians and ecclesiastics stood as traffic policemen directing the traveller to the Holy City. Such is the logic of a dogmatic Christianity. If intellectual conformity be of supreme importance for the eternal welfare

of the soul, Calvin was justified in exterminating the pestilential heresy of Servetus, and the secular arm was merciful to St. Joan. "It is much more serious," said St. Thomas Aquinas, "to corrupt faith, which gives life to the soul, than to falsify money, which sustains temporal life. If, therefore, the falsifiers of money or other malefactors are at once by secular princes justly given up to death, much more may heretics, as soon as they are convicted of their heresy, be not only excommunicated, but justly killed." [7]

Nor is this sin always left behind as one escapes from the bondage of conformity into the freedom of the spirit. There may be an intolerance of the emancipated, an illiberality of the liberals, a narrowness in those who fancy themselves broad. Intolerant mysticism may be as presumptuous as intolerant Pharisaism. What should bring one to the mercy seat may leave one in the seat of the scorner. The mystic, though he be dazzled by his gift of insight, and may cover his face before the glory of his vision, may at the same time feel a sense of spiritual superiority, and view

[7] *Multo enim gravius est corrumpere fidem per quam est animae vita quam falsare pecuniam per quam temporali vitae subvenitur. Unde si falsarii pecuniae vel alli malefactores statim per seculares principes juste morti traduntur, multo magis haeretici statim ex quo de haeresi convincuntur possunt non solum excommunicari sed et juste occidi.* Summa Theol. *2a, 2æ, Quest. XI, Art. 3.*

with condescension or contempt the stumbling approach of the reason toward the truth. Spiritual intolerance, in other words, is the sin of small minds in their dealings with great themes. It may even convert the church of the Spirit into a new church of authority, and forget that the New Jerusalem, as the Book of Revelation says, has twelve gates, three on each side of the Holy City, that those gates are open all day, and that there is no night there. The disciple of the church of the Spirit, like the disciple of the church of authority, may overlook the fact that when, according to the Fourth Gospel, Jesus said "I am the door," as though there were but one way to go, he added, "by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture." The door, that is to say, swings both ways; within is the fold, but without is the pasture; and the sheep may welcome not only rest and safety within the door, but the freedom and herbage of the hills.

Spiritual intolerance is thus to be overcome, not by indifference or neutrality, but by the increasing sense of the magnitude and mystery of faith, which unites diversities of temperament and tradition in the comprehensive fellowship of the one Spirit. "The real unity of Christendom," Phillips Brooks has said, "is not to be found at last in identity of organization, or in identity of dogma.

Both of these have been dreamed of, and have failed; but in the unity of spiritual consecration to a common Lord." [8] The more certain one becomes that he has found a way, the surer he becomes that there are other ways,—not so direct, he may believe,—yet coming at last to one of the twelve open gates of the Holy City. Catholicity is not a product of conformity, but of consecration. Here, as the same Book of Revelation says, is the patience and the faith of the saints. The most fatal sin of the church of the Spirit is spiritual pride. Its controlling ideal should realize the hope of the Apostle Paul, and serve the Lord "with all humility of mind."

[8] "Tolerance," 1887, p. 55.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT MILITANT

If the interior hindrances which obstruct religious experience have been with any justice enumerated; if, while the church of authority is primarily concerned with the sins of nonconformity or denial, the church of the Spirit is peculiarly tempted by spiritual illiteracy, complacency, indolence and intolerance, it remains to consider the external enemies with which spiritual religion is confronted, and the nature of its militant warfare.

The title, The Church Militant, has always seemed appropriate for an aggressive and fearless Christianity. It is, in the phrase of Hooker, "the church on earth engaged in warfare with hell and the world." To put on the whole armor of God, to enlist in the cause of Christ with soldierly obedience,—this call to service has been through all the Christian centuries the inspiration of missionary effort, the challenge to heroism, and the prophecy of victory. No hymn stirs a Christian gathering to more vigorous participation than the martial summons:

> Onward Christian soldiers,
> Marching as to war.

The thought of a mighty army on its march to conquest is an exhilarating, even if it be at times a somewhat ironical, appeal to a peaceful and comfortable congregation.

But to what end is this march to be directed? Against what enemy is the church militant called to fight? When the congregation sings:

> The Christian warrior, see him stand,
> In the whole armor of his God,

what is this armor which he is wearing, and what is the warfare in which he is engaged? The answer to these questions may be approached, as was the question of internal weakness, by contrasting the campaign proposed by the church of authority with that contemplated by the church of the Spirit. Both are aware that the forces of worldliness, selfishness, and ignorance, of cruelty and light-mindedness, are the common enemies of all Christian living. The gospel of Christ is universally recognized as summoning to a moral revival, and the Christian church in all its communions has set itself to this redemptive task. There is no monopoly of such sacrifice or service. The saints of the church who dedicate themselves to such regeneration may be priests or laymen, Catholics or Protestants, churchmen or heretics, men or women. Father Damien among the lepers

and David Livingstone among the savages; Friends of God in the sixth century, and the Society of Friends in the twentieth century,—these and a great cloud of other witnesses have perpetuated the philanthropy and demonstrated the vitality of Christian ideals and hopes.

Never was this outward-looking, comprehensive, and regenerating mission of the church so unreservedly recognized as at the present time. In all countries where Christianity has been even nominally accepted, this vocation, not only for the healing of the individual soul but also for the redemption of social life, has been of late undertaken with unprecedented enthusiasm. It is the age of a social Christianity. In varying ways and degrees, all Christian communions feel themselves called to the task of Christianizing the social order. The Gospel has become accepted not only as a way of life but as a way of living together. The fresh wind of the Social Question has swept through the church with cleansing force, levelling many barriers which once set worship apart from work and the salvation of the soul from the salvation of the world. As the title of one of the earliest and most prophetic books of the new era indicated, the world is the subject of redemption.[1]

[1] Fremantle, "The World as the Subject of Redemption," 1885 (2nd ed., 1895, with an introduction by R. T. Ely and important appendices).

When, however, one turns from these contemporary evidences of spiritual vitality to the history of the church militant in its traditional forms, and recalls the campaign for which it has been disciplined and armed, one observes a much more limited programme of subjugation. If it be authoritatively determined that submission to an organization, or acceptance of a creed, is the first essential of Christian discipleship, then the refusal to submit or accept is likely to be regarded as the cardinal sin. Precisely as the internal organism of the church is attacked by false doctrine, heresy and schism, like insidious germs poisoning its blood, so the same organic life is threatened from without by the infection of rival creeds or the contagion of unbelief. Atheism and agnosticism, heathen faiths and modern substitutes for faith, become thus arrayed in the front rank of enemies, and the mighty army of the church militant marches as to war against these defiant adversaries. Its conflict is with the hostile forces of Oriental beliefs and Occidental denials of belief, with ancient superstitions and modern philosophies; and the final victory of the church will be won when, through the generalship of its theological or ecclesiastical leaders, the whole world shall surrender to the church of authority, and, as the Apostle prophesied, every high thing that exalteth itself shall be cast down, and every

thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Such is the magnificent ideal of a converted world which has inspired missionary effort, sustained martyrs, and set before the church a campaign more comprehensive and ambitious than Roman imperialism or Napoleonic dreams. Led by this vision of a surrendered world, the soldiers of the cross have traversed wildernesses, penetrated continents, gloried in hardships, and welcomed death. The winning of the world for Christ has been the aim of Christian militancy. When all nations and tribes shall acknowledge one Master and Lord, then the church militant will at last become the church triumphant, and the prophecy of Isaiah, as renewed in the Gospel, will be fulfilled: He shall send forth judgment unto victory, and in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

It might be pointed out that this march of the church militant has been at many points thwarted, and that its enemies are still undefeated and defiant. Unbelief and indifference still hold their trenches, even if they do not gain ground, and the great Oriental religions still repel the advance of Christian missions by force of competitive ideals and racial pride. Yet these indications of retarded progress, or even of repulse, do not touch the real problem of the campaign. What an aggressive Christianity has first to determine is the

nature and position of its enemy. Oriental faiths may attack its flanks and modern science invade its outposts; but is it, after all, against these forces, formidable though they be, that the central attack of the church militant should be thrown? May it not be that the church, by its very zeal for Christ, has been diverted from fulfilling the mission of Christ? Are there not behind the forces of nonconformity or denial more firmly entrenched positions which challenge a more determined advance? Would conformity, even if it could be secured, either by sacramental baptism or by Biblical authority, insure to the world the possession of the mind of Christ? When an observant Oriental surveys those regions where Christian conformity is most undisputed, does he see there the ripened harvest of the fruits of the Spirit? Has the acceptance of Christian dogma cleansed the springs of Christian conduct? Have the nations which confess Christ abolished war, forgotten hate, purified domestic life, pacified industry, and spiritualized religion? Might not a militant church win all the world to its allegiance, as Rome dominated the world of its time, and still find, like Rome, that while it had gained the world it had lost its soul? May not the church militant be so preoccupied with fighting other churches, or fighting for its own existence, that those who want to fight the real sins of the modern world

may enlist under other banners? May it not happen, as with the crusaders in Palestine, that the church, in marching to save what seem the holy places, will discover that its Master is waiting to be found and obeyed at home?

What an extraordinary spectacle is at this moment presented by the ecclesiastical and doctrinal militancy of the Christian Church! Thousands of devout and learned representatives of the religion of Jesus are still confidently urging the authority of hierarchies, or the significance of sacraments, or are hotly debating the physical conditions of the birth of Jesus, or teaching the inerrancy of Scripture, or proclaiming the visible return of their risen Lord; while the thought and conduct of the modern world, its science, its politics, its business, its social life,—the interests which preoccupy nine-tenths of its working hours, —proceed in the vast majority of cases with no concern whatever, or at the most with a languid and casual interest, for these theological and ecclesiastical discussions, as though they spoke in a foreign language and occupied another continent. To most modern minds these ecclesiastical claims and exegetical controversies seem to be matters with which men and women of the work-a-day world have nothing to do. They go their ways, like the men in the parable, "one to his farm, another to his merchandise," leaving the defense of

the Christian religion to the literalists or the sentimentalists or the dreamers; and the church militant finds itself either attacking positions from which it must in the end retreat, or capturing positions which have been long deserted as not worth defending.

If one be thus led to view with slackened confidence the militancy of the church of authority, and turns to the ideals which persuade the church of the Spirit, he finds himself,—not, indeed, in a different area of operations, or summoned to a less aggressive campaign,—but confronted by enemies much more firmly entrenched than the heretics or the sceptics or the unbelievers. It is not that the church has less fighting to do, but that it finds a new objective for its militancy. The forces which the church of the Spirit finds itself called to attack are not primarily those of theological errors or alien creeds, however threatening these may be, but the far more insidious antagonism of a despiritualized and materialized civilization, against whose mass of self-confident indifference theological arguments are like light batteries which cannot reach their mark, and direct their fire in vain. What the church of the Spirit sees before it, as it arms itself for militancy, is not merely false gods to be cast down and pagan races to be redeemed, but, straight before it in the strategic points of contemporary life, the false

ideals of the Christian world itself and the modern paganism of base and sensual desires. It would be well, indeed, to convert the heathen in foreign parts, but that great achievement must begin by converting the heathen at home. What the Christian life in the modern world has most to fear is not the attack of hostile criticism or subtle philosophy, but the atrophy of spiritual vision, the laxity of undisciplined wills, the decline of serious-mindedness, the loss of reverence, the cynicism of intellectualism, and the satisfactions of sensualism. These are the marks of a despiritualized civilization which in all the Christian centuries has arrested the advance of the Christian religion, supplied ammunition for its opponents, and offered a refuge for timid deserters; and these stubborn and self-confident foes still confront Christian militancy. In short, the church has hoped to win by domination what can be gained by nothing but consecration. It has hoped to dictate, when its mission is to serve. It has proposed to crush, when it is called to redeem. "The worst enemies of Christianity," Dean Inge concludes in his "Confessio fidei," "are Christians. . . . When traditional orthodoxy provokes the moral indignation of the enlightened conscience, and outrages our sense of truth and honesty by demanding our assent to scientific errors which were exploded centuries ago, then

indeed the church is in danger, and its well-disciplined battalions will not save it from disaster." [2]

When, however, the spiritual tradition takes command of Christian militancy, there ensues a different order of obligations, or, as philosophers say, a transvaluation of values. Integrity becomes more essential than conformity; the spirit of truth more essential than the forms of truth. Not scholarship and science, but self-interest and brutality, prejudice and passion, sensualism and sin, hold the strategic positions which the church militant is called to win. The church of authority has failed in its militancy by attacking the wrong objectives. It has assumed that the issue before it is between science and faith, or between evolutionism and creationism, or between Biblical inerrancy and Biblical criticism; and in committing itself to such controversies it has courted defeat. The church of the Spirit, on the other hand, directs its frontal attack against the weakness of will and demoralization of desire which confront it in the modern world, and of which arguments and denials are but the scouts and outposts. In a word, the militancy of the church of the Spirit is not so much the subduing of the world to the rule of Christ as the penetration of the world by the spirit of Christ. When the Apostle Paul charged the good soldiers of Jesus

[2] "Outspoken Essays," II, 1922, p. 58.

Christ to put on the whole armor of God he offered them but one offensive weapon. They might protect themselves with the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation; but their attack must be made with the sword of the Spirit. The only irresistible argument for Christianity is its effect on character. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." The sword of the Spirit does not slay its adversaries; it disarms them.

The contrast of objectives thus suggested may be illustrated if one turns to any form of social organization which modern life assumes, and observes the campaign proposed by the church militant against the enemies of social security. The institution of the family, for example, is at the present time gravely threatened by instability, and the Christian church is forced to realize that its ideals have been widely ignored and its precepts mocked. The church of authority, however, has in the main approached this critical situation as a governmental problem. It legislates against laxity; it prohibits divorce, or permits divorce for but a single cause; it teaches the sanctity or indissolubility of the marriage tie; it coöperates with the State in securing decent procedure; it scrutinizes the sayings of the Gospel and compares what seem to be differing rules. All these palliative restrictions and legislative enactments have their part in the regulation of the

family. It is better to promote reasonable seriousness in undertaking marriage than to tolerate a union "by words of common consent." It is better to require six months' probation between divorce and remarriage than three months, or one. Where the State fails to control the wayward instincts of its citizens, the Christian church is justified in enforcing its own rules of decency and order. Yet these regulations and limitations, as the reports of the daily press sufficiently indicate, have had slight effect in restraining lawless and reckless lives. The statistics of instability become each year more startling, and the disintegration of the family more ominous and defiant.

It would seem evident therefore that this legislative militancy of the church, justifiable though it may be, has not been directed against the strategic position of its enemy. The evils of domestic laxity may be mitigated by governmental restrictions and ecclesiastical legislation; but the source of this evil lies much deeper, in the sensualism which mistakes liberty for license, and the selfishness which tolerates neither discipline nor restraint. "From within, out of the heart of men," said Jesus, "proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications. . . . All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." No campaign of external legislation can expel these things which

defile the man while the heart of man is still resistant and unsurrendered.

At this point enters the militancy of the church of the Spirit. Restrictions and regulations still have their salutary work to do. The institution of the family may be fortified by the institution of the church. What the church has most to fear, however, is that its members may be led to regard family integrity as created and maintained by ecclesiastical legislation, and that the formation of a family is a contract of mutual consent to be made or broken by the law of Church or State. To think of marriage as essentially a legal form is to think of it as prescribed or conditional, and therefore temporary or provisional; and the habit of reference to external regulation may encourage the very law-breaking which it is designed to check.

The campaign of the church of the Spirit proposes, therefore, no conflict with these restraints of the church of authority; it simply presses its attack against the enemy's reserves; against the passions and sins which threaten marital discord, against social ambition and unbridled lust, against disinclination for child-bearing and vagrant desires; and it advances to this attack under the flags of fidelity, simplicity, and self-control. To the church of the Spirit the family is not primarily an institution maintained by law but a union per-

petuated by love. Instability in marriage is not chiefly promoted by easy ways of escape, but by easy habits of entrance, by thoughtlessness and recklessness in consummating the most momentous decision of life. By the candid education of childhood in the nature and relations of physical life; by the communication of spiritual ideals through the teaching and example of the home; by the subordination of commercialism and the reenforcement of idealism, the church of the Spirit sets itself to rescue the family from disaster. Marriage, it teaches, is not essentially a legal contract, but a spiritual venture; not a conditional agreement, but a mutual pledge; to be guaranteed in stability, not by legislation but by consecration. It promotes happiness by demanding goodness, and if it set happiness before goodness it is likely to forfeit both. The first concern in approaching marriage is not a consideration of the chance of getting free. It is a union, not for the satisfaction of lust or whim, but for the training of the will through the discipline of love. Such is the teaching of Jesus, which still invites his followers, however divided they may be by the varied regulations of the church of authority, into the larger fellowship and more substantial unity of the church of the Spirit.

If one passes from considering this inner circle of social life to a survey of the problems which

meet the Christian church in the environing social order, the same contrast of militant operations may be observed. What is called "social service" has become an essential factor in the campaign of the church militant. The high tide of spiritual life which swept into the world through the teaching of Jesus bore on its crest a new philanthropy. The *caritas* of the early Christians had a quality of intimate and personal devotion unknown to the *prodigalitas* of the Roman world. To love one's neighbor became the immediate corollary of love to one's God. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," said Jesus, "if ye have love one to another."

There remains, however, a radical difference between the motives and methods of accredited philanthropy as prescribed by the church of authority and those which challenge the wisdom and invite the sacrifices of the church of the Spirit. Social service under ecclesiastical or denominational administration has in large part contented itself, as did indeed the *caritas* of the early church, with works of compassion and mitigation of distress. Christian philanthropy has nursed the sick, fed the hungry, protected the children, sheltered the homeless, and lifted the fallen. In all these diverse and beautiful ways of human sympathy, the Master's test of discipleship has been accepted: "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty,

and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and yet ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Yet it was almost inevitable that as the principle of authority came to dominate the life of the church, its forms of social service should assume, often quite unconsciously, an air of condescension and self-approval. The church had its inheritance to transmit and its gifts to bestow. Its deeds of mercy might easily become investments of faith and its pity might degenerate into patronage. Help might be given to the helpless, not so much to change their lot, as to make more endurable the lot in which God had seen fit to place them. Benefactions might accrue to the credit of the benefactor. Institutionalism in philanthropy might thus become a gesture of institutionalism in religion, and charity the condescension of a beneficent church. "When he had fasted forty days and forty nights," it has been ironically said of such kindly dispensers of relief, "behold angels came, and patronized him." The social service of the Christian church, lavish though it be, may thus become a monument of compassion rather than a campaign of wisdom. Christians may reach down generous hands to

sufferers with genuine pity, while still expecting to find their own ample reward, either in the glow of generous sympathy or in the assurance of future bliss. Thus the church may become a kind of bank of deposit, holding a great sum of invested virtue which it from time to time lends to others, as a beneficent capitalist distributes his surplus income, while his estate is still left secure.

When one turns from this habit of mind, where militancy may mean domination, and philanthropy may become a weapon of propaganda, and observes the programme of the church of the Spirit, he finds himself, it is true, in the same area of conflict, but with a different and far more ambitious plan of campaign. The primary assumption of the spiritual tradition derived from Jesus Christ is that of the inherent worth of each human soul. Degraded, defective, or abandoned though a life may be, it has within it the possibility of reconstruction and self-discovery, and the strategy of the church militant is directed to that campaign of rehabilitation and restoration. Thus the philanthropy of the church of the Spirit begins, not with a gesture of pity but with an act of faith; not with a sense of obligation to help the helpless, but with a belief in the capacity of the helpless to help themselves. "We cannot do much *for* the poor," Jane Addams once said; "we can only do things with the poor."

Such was the method of Jesus. He was the most consistent of individualists. He sought the single life, the single sinner. He believed in people when they did not believe in themselves, and by his faith in them created their faith in themselves. He ate with publicans and sinners, not to patronize them, but to reassure them. Lives that had seemed to themselves irretrievably weak found within themselves resources of strength; and under his touch the doubting Thomas found his faith confirmed and the wavering Peter became a rock. "As many as received him," it is written, "to them gave he power to become the sons of God." In other words, the philanthropy of the church of the Spirit is not primarily palliative, but reconstructive; a work, not of the kindly heart alone, but of the discerning mind. It begins, not with the obligation of the giver to do good, but with the education of the receiver to be good; not with condescension, but with coöperation; not with the service of the church, but with the service of the man.

It is the same shift of emphasis which is now occurring in the principles of education. For many centuries the training of the young was promoted by the condescension of the old. Tradition had provided a stock of knowledge which was to be transmitted to youth as essential for education. The teacher was a builder according

to a predetermined plan, and the scholar was crude material to be shaped into the structure of education. When one had been thus moulded into the prescribed shape and conformed to the authorized pattern, then he was educated. The pattern might vary with racial differences; education in China might have little in common with that of Europe; but the same principle of an authoritative standard to be transmitted by a privileged class to docile youth, was in control. Education had become a form of patronage.

The new education is of a wholly different type. It proceeds, not from the point of view of the teacher but from that of the scholar. It is primarily concerned, not with a stock of established knowledge to be transmitted, but with the infinitely varied possibilities of youth, and with the problem of self-discovery. The task of the modern educator, as his title implies, is that of e-ducing, or drawing out, from within the unconscious or unrealized mind of youth the latent capacity for self-direction, self-development, and self-control. Whatever thus draws out the hidden self is sound education, even if it lack the marks of educational tradition. The problem of the teacher is to discover what is in the child and bring it to expression. Education thus becomes not condescension but coöperation. The teacher is

not the agent of an institution, but the awakener of a life.

The same contrast is met when one passes from condescending philanthropy to coöperative philanthropy. The mind of the church of the Spirit is set, not on transmitting a privilege or offering a gift, but on discovering the unexplored capacities of human lives and bringing them to self-realization. Christian philanthropy, thus applied to the destitute or the delinquent, proposes the restoration of personality, the revival of hope, the communication of power. It distrusts institutional methods; it segregates its wards; it humanizes their conditions; it recalls the psalmist's thanksgiving: "God setteth the solitary in families." "The institution boy," Jacob Riis once said, "makes the worst apprentice. He is saved from being a tough by becoming an automaton." To have faith in lives which have lost faith in themselves; to find for those who sit in darkness a way to the light, and upon those who are in the shadow of death to let the light shine; to forget the interests of the church and think only of the service of the soul; to communicate to the despairing a new heart and to the defeated a new courage—that is to follow the way of self-forgetting redemption which Jesus walked, and to communicate, even to one who was a sinner,

the great reassuring hope: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

It need not be said again that this campaign of constructive service is no monopoly of any communion or creed. All genuine Christian faith finds itself thus called to social redemption. The church by its very nature represents corporate philanthropy. One of the most precious verses in the New Testament is that which, apparently without design, supplements the social teaching of the gospel by the happy reminiscence of Paul: "In all things I gave you an example, how that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Yet it should be observed that as social service becomes reconstructive rather than mitigating, the church of authority finds itself no longer the sole agent of benevolence, but must recognize the fruits of the Spirit in many lives which it has been inclined to disown. Much of the philanthropy which most completely represents the Christian tradition has been, in fact, devised and achieved by nonconformists or heretics. The first campaign against human slavery was undertaken, not by the organized church, but by the militancy—if one may use such a word—of the Society of Friends. The exposure of the hor-

rors of British prisons and the beginning of their reform were not achievements of the Establishment, but of the untiring crusade of the dissenter, John Howard, and the gentle courage of the Quaker, Elizabeth Fry. The unremitting campaign of William Wilberforce for emancipation of the slaves in the British colonies was sustained by the piety of the Clapham Sect, but was opposed in the House of Lords by a prince of the royal blood and by the Archbishop of Canterbury, though the latter soon confessed repentance for his view.[3] The most distinguished name in the history of philanthropy in America is that of Samuel Gridley Howe, the devoted friend of the radical preacher, Theodore Parker and the Sir Galahad, as he was called, of modern knighthood, dedicating the same daring which had led him to fight for Greeks against Turks to the more audacious, and as it seemed more hopeless, campaign for the education of the blind and the feeble-minded. The first definite expression of the science of poor-relief in America, as later represented by charity organization societies, was made by Joseph Tuckerman, an obscure pastor in Boston, in the scheme of district visiting, described in his epoch-making treatise on "The Elevation of the Poor." The first comprehensive effort in America to rescue the insane from degrading

[3] Coupland, "Wilberforce, A Narrative," 1923, pp. 175, 215.

treatment was made by a young woman, Dorothea Dix, who was a member of the household of William Ellery Channing. Not one of these adventurous witnesses of faith and love could have found acceptance in the Christian Church as it was in their time authoritatively defined. Their Christology was defective; their association was with heretics; their devotion and wisdom were not sufficient credentials for admission to the church of authority; but they were prepared to receive the gracious promise, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

A similar contrast is met as one observes the campaign of the church militant in the modern industrial world. It is obvious to all serious-minded observers that the contentions of business life—its strikes, its lockouts, its intermittent employment, its organizations for attack and defense, constitute a mockery of the social order for which Christians daily pray: Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," says Jesus, and the laying up of these treasures proceeds at an astonishing rate. The Son of man, says Jesus again, is as a man who gave to every man his work; but in the modern world great numbers of men have no work given them to do, and many others announce as their aim a mad

defiance of the work offered to them. Into this field of disorder and distress the church militant is called to enter, with a fearless and far-sighted plan of campaign. To have no part in the redemption of industry, to satisfy itself with exhortation, as the church is often advised to do by cautious industrialists, is to be set apart from the real world, speaking the language of another era and leaving untouched the Gospel of the kingdom of God.

But what shall be the direction and strategy to be undertaken by the church militant among the problems of modern industry? The church of authority has repeatedly proposed for itself the domination of contemporary life by the organization of religion. Such was the magnificent scheme of St. Augustine as propounded in his "City of God." There were, he taught, two forms of social life; the mundane (*civitas terrena*) and the heavenly (*civitas cœlestis*); the State and the Church; Rome and the New Jerusalem. The City of God should have the institutional support of the earthly city, but the latter must in due time be merged in the former and the City of God be supreme.[4] A similar conception of dominating control reappeared in the Middle Ages under the masterful authority of Hilde-

[4] *Cf.* the more detailed sketch in the C.O.P.E.C. Commission Report, Vols. VII and XII, 1924.

brand. The church was to prescribe the supreme law of secular life. The State should become a *Respublica Christiana,* in which the people were to be protected and the clergy to be privileged: "He that is spiritual [the ecclesiastic], judgeth all things. Yet he himself is judged by no man." The Church should dictate to the world. "The *Civitas Dei* must absorb the *civitas terrena.*" [5]

The modern church, even in its most authoritative forms, no longer asserts this stupendous claim to give laws to the world. Its city of God becomes less despotic; its Christian republic more democratic. Yet the inclination of the church of authority to regulate and dictate still persists, and not infrequently leads it to invade economic life with ill-considered or precipitate militancy. To propose a campaign of "Christian economics" or of "Christian sociology" is to ignore the obvious fact that economics and sociology are concerned with complex conditions of modern life which would have been quite unintelligible in the first Christian century. To announce, in the name of the Christian religion that the only hope of saving civilization is to destroy capitalism, is to involve the Christian church in impracticable economics, and to encourage the worldly-minded in the retort that the church should mind its own affairs. Religion can no

[5] C.O.P.E.C. Report, Vol. XII, p. 67.

more change economic law than it can change the law of gravitation; but economic law may be overruled in practice by introducing the motives of religion, just as in every walk one takes he overrules the law of gravitation. In short, the mission of the church to industrial life is not that of regulation but that of inspiration; not that of a new science but that of a new attitude.

Here enters the militancy of the church of the Spirit. It is primarily concerned, not with the economics of industry, but with its ethics; not with the forms but with the ideals of business life. If industrial affairs are controlled by the motives of robbers or gamblers no change of economic method can guarantee social stability or peace. The abolition of capitalism and the substitution of communal ownership, confidently as this redistribution of property is now urged, could give slight assurance of social stability if it were controlled by self-interest and divorced from obligation. The economics of Soviet Russia offer slight encouragement to those who desire industrial peace. As Tacitus said of the Britons: "Plunder, murder, rapine, they falsely call government; and where they make a solitude they call it peace." [6]

The church of the Spirit begins at the other end

[6] *Auferre trucidare rapere falsis nominibus imperium, atque ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.* Agricola, Cap. 30.

of the industrial problem, with its human agents and its moral significance. It may welcome and utilize the various schemes and programmes of the church of authority, as it utilizes the intricate machinery of the modern world, but its primary concern is for the lives within the machine, the undernourished bodies and undisciplined wills caught among the whirling wheels; and not less with the cupidity, or even more, the stupidity, of employers and administrators. The kingdom of God, in the business world as elsewhere, is not an external growth, but a spiritual revolution, to be created, not by better machinery but by better men. Each undertaking of fraternalism and co-operation in industry; each provision for training in efficiency and responsibility; each form of mutual service and loyalty in business, which converts economic science into moral science, is not only a contribution to industrial peace, but a witness to the vitality of the church of the Spirit.

There remains, finally, that larger environment of national and international life which has suffered so grievously from the destructive militancy of armies, and waits for the restorative militancy of the Christian church. In spite of the lingering animosities and racial ambitions which still threaten the peace of the world it has become obvious that the stability of one nation is not a separable and competitive undertaking, but corre-

lated and coöperative with the welfare of other nations; that the modern world is an interdependent whole, where if one member suffer, all suffer, and if one is strong it is the strength of all. A policy of national isolation is a confession of national ignorance. The great silent processes of production and distribution make national detachment, not merely a political blunder, but an intellectual delusion. The Christian church is, therefore, called to preach once more its cardinal doctrine of the kingdom of God; or, in modern phrase, of social solidarity, mutual responsibility, and international righteousness.

The church militant has welcomed this new, and perhaps this last, opportunity to justify its leadership of the modern world; and its various communions have proclaimed a war against war, and an alliance for the promotion of international friendship through the churches. Out from the internecine warfare and diplomatic chaos of the last ten years there emerges once more the ideal of a *Respublica Christiana,* in which war shall be remembered as of the ages of barbarism, and international hate and envy shall be displaced by fraternal justice. By many forms of organized protest, a "Fellowship of Reconciliation," a "Women's International League for Peace and Freedom," a "No-More-War Movement," a "Students' Christian Federa-

tion," the obligation to oppose declarations of war, or even to refuse participation in war if declared, is zealously urged, and has become a conspicuous and aggressive movement of the church militant.

Concerning the conscientiousness and courage of such organized efforts no doubt can be reasonably felt. These protestants are not slackers, afraid to fight, but are expressing—what all sane observers of the last years must feel—a justifiable horror of the atrocities of war and a resolution that they shall never occur again. The more experience one had of the carnage and filth of the World-War, the more abhorrent becomes the thought of another. It was not a pacifist, but an English general, guiding Mrs. Humphrey Ward along the battle front, who said, "War is crass folly; crass folly! nothing else! We want new forms of religion—the old one seems to have failed us." [7]

The church of the Spirit has no controversy with these programmes of legislative or moral protest. They have their own difficulties to meet, and may lead to grave collision between loyalty to Christ and loyalty to country, between pacifism and patriotism. It is not, however, with these organizations or resolutions that the church of the Spirit is primarily concerned. Its problem

[7] Trevelyan, "Life of Mrs. Humphrey Ward," 1923, p. 278.

is much more fundamental; for it proposes to attack the forces of ambition and lust which through the whole course of human history have been responsible for the resort to arms. War between nations is, after all, not a cause but a consequence; not a primal curse of civilization, but an acquired taint; and while no effort toward mitigation or prohibition should be relaxed, the eradication of the malady must be sought at its source of infection, among the motives and passions which poison human life. "War will be prevented only by a scientific study of its causes, such as has prevented most epidemic diseases." [8] Proclamations of a war against war may easily encounter the same risk which the church of authority has met in dealing with domestic or industrial ills—the risk of making a frontal assault where the enemy is strongest instead of attacking at less defensible points. Like the charge at Balaklava, such generalship may be magnificent, but not war. Christian militancy is called to be not only brave but effective. No war against war can abolish fighting so long as men want to fight. The instincts of self-defence or aggression inherited from countless generations of fighting ancestors, will, if not outgrown or supplanted, break through all pledges of restraint, and seduce a country into the great adventure of war; and

[8] J. B. S. Haldane in *Atlantic Monthly*, Jan., 1925, p. 1.

the protests of the Christian church will seem a mere fluttering of talk which one great storm of popular agitation or indignation will sweep away like autumn leaves. Thus it is that the politicians and militarists still devise their plans of organization and mobilization with slight apprehension of restraint; and while the church militant contents itself with exhortations, national governments proceed with preparations, as though the church of Christ did not exist.

If, however, the essential relation of the Christian church to contemporary politics is not that of one institution confronting another institution, but, on the contrary, that of a spiritual force ruling the hearts of men, then its campaign of international militancy becomes more penetrating, more persistent, and more prolonged. It applies itself, not merely to pledges about the future, but with no less determination to purposes immediately realizable; to the promotion of international comity and coöperation; to the revival of international trade; to the reduction of armaments and the enforcement of arbitration; and to that association of nations which, whether it take the form of the existing League or limit itself to the establishing of an international court, presents the only feasible and substantial bulwark now constructed against the onset of war. The church of the Spirit is thus called to promote by every

means within its power the education of citizenship in the fraternalism of the international mind. Its campaign becomes much more comprehensive than many of its own advocates seem to realize. It cannot be won by direct attack. The passing of war is not to be procured by the passing of resolutions. If one-tenth of the annual expenditure, the diplomatic wisdom, the scientific research, and the technical skill, now lavished on preparations for war—on ships and guns, on devastating bombs and poisonous gases—were to be devoted to preparations for peace, to international comity and magnanimity, to world organization and mutual beneficence, the war against war would be short and decisive. What is lacking is not the ability of the nations, but what the prophet called the "desire of the nations"; not the opportunity but the will. The song of the angels at the coming of Jesus was of peace on earth, but the peace which they prophesied was for none but men of good-will. Nothing less than the reorganization of the world in coöperative efficiency, an association of nations continuous and coherent enough to prohibit precipitate hostilities, the dedication of generosity and wisdom to the service of disheartened nations, the abandonment of provocative policies and bullying gestures—these, together with the cleansing of hearts from provincial prejudice and racial hate,

are the essential preliminaries of international peace to which the church of the Spirit should devote its great campaign.

One of the most beautiful promises of Jesus is that which assures the peace-makers that they are to be the children of God, inheriting his character and fulfilling his work. But it is important to notice who they are to whom the promise is made. It is not the peace-talkers, or the peace-lovers only, who are to be blessed, but the peace-makers; those who by their constructive militancy make a peace which is fit to stay. It is a most interesting fact that, although the United States still withholds its official consent to participate in restoring tranquillity and hope to Europe, American citizens are advising and administering the schemes of reparation on which that tranquillity and hope depend; and are even directing, with no ulterior motive, the internal affairs of European States. Of such are the makers of peace, whose work shall be blessed. "The work of righteousness," said the prophet Isaiah, "shall be peace." Not peace first, and as a consequence a righteous world, but righteousness first, and then a peace which, as the prophet goes on to say, is quietness and assurance forever. Not until domestic life is rescued from the contentions of self-interest and the clash of wills; not until industrial life becomes fraternal and political life pure, can a na-

tion anticipate that the dark shadow of war shall pass from the horizon of international life and the blessing of the peace-makers be assured. The militancy of the church of the Spirit faces the moral evils of the world as the Allies faced the Central Powers of Europe, realizing that they must be attacked on every flank if victory is to be secured. The holy war is all one campaign, and the war against war may be won where victory is least expected. It is the makers of peace, in industry, in politics, in social life, or even within the Christian church itself, who may find themselves, to their great surprise, the accepted and happy children of God.

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH OF THE SPIRIT TRIUMPHANT

If the militancy of the church of the Spirit is summoned to so great a campaign against the sins of modern life, what may be anticipated of its outcome? Is the Christian church to be left behind in the march of the modern world, as a picturesque monument of an earlier era, with its places of worship maintained as museums of ancient art where exhibits of primitive faith are patronized by sentimentalists and amateurs; or is the Christian church still a militant force, with a great cause to serve and a great victory to win? How shall the church militant become the church triumphant? What are to be the signs of victory in the campaign of the church of the Spirit?

One turns again to the church of authority for an answer to these questions, and considers what it has proposed to itself as the final triumph of its long and arduous campaign. The technical and ecclesiastical use of the phrase, The Church Triumphant, refers its victory to another world. Here there must always be fightings, and often defeats, for the church militant. Not until the

saints are at last gathered round the Throne, with their robes made white in the blood of the Lamb, shall the great dragon Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, be cast out, and his angels with him, and the great multitude which no one can number, of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues, celebrate their victory. Such is the scene of triumph which Christian art has loved to depict, when at last the conflicts of this world are ended and there remaineth a rest for the people of God.

Yet this glad hope of a future consummation is by no means the only, or the chief, motive for the militancy of the church of authority. It dreams not less vividly of a victory in this life. Its missionaries traverse the world; its messages are broadcasted, not alone to promise future bliss, but to secure immediate surrender to Christian rule. Some day, even if that day be long delayed in coming, all the diverse faiths and races of the world shall be at last gathered into the one fold, and in that uniform confession and corporate unity the church militant will become the church triumphant, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. It is a stupendous ideal which thus impels the church of authority in its march to victory. Sacred hands shall be

laid on all the unconverted; sacred Scriptures shall be translated into all languages; and the war-cry shall be heard, "The evangelization of the world in this generation!" The Master's prayer that his disciples might be one as he and the Father are one becomes a prophecy of ecclesiastical conformity, in which the victory of the church shall be achieved, and all diversities of tradition, superstition, and creed be subdued to him who is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

The more one reflects on this ecclesiastical anticipation the more hopeless it appears. To anticipate the supplanting or eliminating of all distinctions of race and tradition, to gain authority in the name of Christ over all alien creeds, is not only a scheme which is visionary and impracticable, but one which, even if realized, might not of itself Christianize the world. To hope for a triumph which shall be governmental, administrative, and institutional, is as illusory an ideal in religion as it is in politics. Racial inheritances, temperamental differences, and sentimental associations must long postpone such a unity of organization and control. Indeed, it has been not unreasonably urged that such diversity of conviction concerning the mysteries of God and man is not only inevitable, but may be salutary. "Differences in theological opinion or in devotional

tradition," Canon Streeter has lately said, "are inevitable; indeed, on the whole and up to a point, they are actually desirable. For when all men think the same thing, there is real danger they may leave off thinking about it at all; and when all men do the same thing, what they do is apt to become mere automatic habit or the fashion of the hour." [1]

An instructive commentary on this dream of Christian domination is provided by the history of Christian missions. For many centuries this romantic and gallant campaign has been sustained by the confident hope of subduing the whole world to Christ through uniformity of confession or sacramental blessing; and thousands of saintly men and women, both Catholic and Protestant, have thrown their lives into this crusade with as unmeasured a courage as that which inspired the crusaders of the Middle Ages to attempt the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. Slowly, however, but unmistakably, the plan of foreign missions has become at once more ambitious and more practicable. It proposes, not so much the invasion of the Oriental world by an alien faith or a foreign institution as the communication to that world of the spiritual tradition of the Christian life. It hopes, as the President of the American Board of Foreign Missions has said, to "natural-

[1] *The Churchman*, June 21, 1924.

ize Christianity." "Christianity is grafted upon the ancient national and racial life. The national life is grafted into the ancient trunk of Christianity, which then brings forth fruit after its kind." [2]

Here is no standardizing of thought or denationalizing of temperament. The world is accepted as it is, with its racial differences of thought and sentiment, and the Christian missionary gives himself to the penetration of that world, in all its varied interests of commercial, political, social, and ecclesiastical life, by the spiritual power and illuminating ideals of the Gospel of Christ. Thirty years ago, before Palestine had been invaded by railroads and motor cars, a traveller was riding over the Lebanon and observing the squalid villages on those sterile heights and the hostile demonstrations of their inhabitants. Women fled from his approach; children spat at him as he passed. Beauty, kindliness, and self-respect seemed to have no place in these barren lives. Then, of a sudden, the traveller came upon another village with a wholly different aspect. There were flowers in the windows; unveiled women greeted the passer-by; children flocked beside his horse. What had happened to work this transformation? It was a Christian village. Forty miles away, on the sea-

[2] E. C. Moore, "West and East," 1920, p. 128.

coast, stood the Christian mission at Beirut, planted there forty years before, and it was as if the spirit of the Christian life had radiated one mile a year, disseminating the sunshine of moddesty, gentleness, and love. It was a parable of the new missionary spirit. It may well have been that many conscientious givers to the Beirut School had believed their generosity bestowed to promote consent to dogma; but their agents had fortunately accepted the larger mission of their Lord: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

The church at home may indeed, have much to learn from its own emissaries abroad. The call of Christ to the modern missionary is not to save souls out of the heathen world, but to save that world itself, with its own intellectual achievements, its literature, its art, and its social traditions; not merely to substitute the Bible for the Vedas or the Koran, or Christian sacraments for the much more elaborate and wonder-working rites of heathen worship, but to communicate by word and work—through medical missions, educational missions, and pastoral care—the comprehensive and sympathetic ideals of the Christian life; so that they may be, not superimposed by foreign authority, but welcomed and appropriated as native possessions. The kingdom of God

to the modern missionary is like leaven which a woman took and put in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened; and among his multifarious, and often unecclesiastical, tasks, he recalls his Master's reassuring words: "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die."

Here then emerges from behind the programme of the church of authority the more audacious, yet more alluring, programme of the church of the Spirit. It proposes no repudiation of doctrines or nullification of creeds. Ecclesiastical traditions and dogmatic teaching still have their legitimate influence in satisfying the reason or quickening the emotions; but in all these speculations of thought and elaborations of worship the church of the Spirit sees the imperfect attempts of the mind and heart to interpret and confirm the supreme experience of communion between the soul and God. They may open the way for the church to march to its triumph, but they are not the scene of that triumph itself. Beyond the contentions of creeds and the diversities of form which often obstruct the advance of Christian militancy, the church of the Spirit sees its real enemy in the allied forces of evil which threaten modern civilization itself, and over which its real triumph must be gained. It is to be no mere victory of one organization among the many

which the modern world exhibits; no mere domination of a single form or law; but the penetration of the entire area of modern thought and life by the spiritual power of the Christian life; so that victory shall arrive, not through submission, but through coöperation; not through the authority of law, but through the persuasion of love. Such is the world-comprehending ideal of the church of the Spirit—not a victory over the world, but an alliance with it; a unity of the spirit which is the bond of peace.

In one of the most striking sayings of Jesus he anticipates this comprehensive undertaking and indicates his way of strategy in this world-war of the church. The field, he says, in "declaring" the parable of the tares, is the world. Nothing less than mastery over all the varied interests and vocations of men is the stupendous intention of the church triumphant. That field may be a battle-field, where the Christian life has to fight its way; or it may be, as Jesus saw it, a grain-field, with weeds enough to discourage many a sower, but with potential capacity for bountiful harvest. And what are to be the forces that may triumph; the seed that may ripen? The good seed, Jesus answers, are the children of the kingdom. Given enough good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and the enemies he foresees will be, not crushed by the church triumphant, but won over

to its side. Given enough good seed, and the tares will be, not rooted out, but crowded out by the dominating vitality of the children of the kingdom.[3] Nothing less than this is the mission of the church triumphant. The field of the church of the Spirit is the entire area of conflict and desire where the battles of modern life are to be fought and won.

If, then, this diversified campaign awaits the warfare of the church of the Spirit, what resources are at its command; and what alliances can be secured for so vast a venture?

The first condition of victorious militancy lies, of course, within the church itself, in the genuineness and vitality of its own religious life. A golden age, Herbert Spencer once said, cannot be made by leaden people. The field, which is the world, can receive no other fertilizing seed than the children of the kingdom. Here is where the Christian church finds its triumph most delayed. It hopes to communicate to others what it has not experienced itself. It expects to gain the world without losing its own life. The most elementary

[3] It is interesting to meet this same teaching repeated, perhaps without consciousness of its source, by one of the most detached observers of the modern world. "The essence of Christianity," writes George Santayana, "as of everything else, is the whole of it; and the genuine nature of a seed is at least as well expressed by what it becomes in contact with the earth and air as by what it seems in its primitive minuteness." "Winds of Doctrine," 1913, p. 29.

teaching of Jesus is the hopelessness of such formal and external attack. Cleanse first, he says, the inside of the cup and platter. For their sakes sanctify thyself. The chief hindrance to the triumphant progress of the Christian religion is the chasm which lies between profession and practice among Christians. The only missionary movement which can win the world to Christ is through the evidences of discipline, self-effacement and consecration by Christian disciples. The church triumphant must be the church of the Spirit.

And what, one may proceed to ask, are the forces on which this fellowship of the Spirit may count, to reënforce its campaign and contribute to its victory? The first of such coöperating forces is that of Science. The apprehension has been often expressed that the study of nature is a peril to religious faith; that geology conflicts with Genesis, that natural law threatens spiritual liberty; that evolution eliminates God; and this belated warfare still persists between scientific materialists and theological literalists, as though no approach to a mutual understanding between science and faith had been made in fifty years. "It is difficult," Dean Inge has lately said, "for a man to accept orthodox Christianity as the Churches present it to him without treachery to his scientific conscience. The injury thus in-

flicted upon religion can hardly be measured."[4] When, however, one turns to authoritative expressions of the modern scientific spirit, he hears a new note of sympathy with spiritual religion. "Christianity," Sir David Bruce has lately said, as President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, "has nothing to fear from the advancement of science; rather should she be proud of the great progress that has been made under the Christian dispensation. Dogmatism is the danger that besets science, as it has beset and hindered Christianity in the past." The same conclusion is stated from the other side by Dean Inge as President of the Modern Churchman's Conference of 1924: "This reaction against naturalism or mechanism, even within the ranks of natural science, is one of the most remarkable phenomena of the day. . . . There can be no treaty between religion and science to leave each other alone. . . . If we try to construct a religion without reference to what we know of the behavior of nature, or in contradiction of what we know of that behavior, our religion will be fatally impoverished or distorted. And if idealism without science is mutilated, sci-

[4] This and the following testimonies are reported in detail in the *Churchman*, Sept. 13, 1924, and in the *Modern Churchman*, 1924, p. 220 ff.

ence without idealism is involved in insoluble difficulties." To the same effect was the testimony of Professor J. S. Haldane, presented to the same assemblage: "I cannot regard the mechanistic theory of life as tenable. It involves quite impossible assumptions and leads us nowhere in respect of the characteristic phenomena of life. . . . A mere mechanical conception of visible reality is fundamentally inadequate. . . . We are not mere self-centred beings, complete in ourselves. . . . Something not ourselves binds us together in spirit—the Reality which men call God."

Differences of method and intention must always exist between the scientific habit of mind and the aims of religious organization, and the materialist will continue to contend with the literalist; but nothing is more obvious in the temper of scientific research than its new appreciation of the "imponderables" which affect physical life and have their place in the environing mystery of the universe. As has been convincingly said in one of the latest studies of theism: "It is in virtue of a reign of law that there is a cosmos to have meaning, and a human reason to discover it. . . . A reign of law such as we find, and such as is not to be confounded with its pseudo-scientific travesties, is one of the strongest links

in the chain which binds scientific knowledge to religious faith." [5] The controversy of science is with unverifiable dogmas and mythological traditions. Modern men of science have, it is true, completely lost confidence, and even interest, in the debates or decisions which so largely preoccupy the church of authority; but they may be counted on as allies, or at least as "unofficial observers" of the arduous campaign which invites the church of the Spirit.

A second ally of spiritual religion is to be found in literature. At the first glance, the very opposite of this might seem the truth. Has not fiction become within one generation very generally vulgarized, and poetry sensualized, and philosophy materialized? Must not religion contend against the debasing influence of current literature, rather than pretend that it is an ally? No one can observe the "best sellers" among modern books, and the most widely circulated of popular magazines, without grave apprehension, not only lest all taste for good literature may be lost, but even lest the very habit of reading may be submerged by the hurrying stream of headlines and "thrillers."

Yet when one looks beneath the scum which drifts on the surface of contemporary literature, and observes its prevailing current, it is impressive

[5] F. R. Tennant in *Harvard Theological Review*, Oct., 1924, pp. 390, 391.

to see how strongly its course sets toward the interpretation of spiritual problems, desires, and needs. Books about religion cannot, it is true, rival in circulation books about adventure or sex; but they have even now an assurance of continuous sale which commends them to publishers. "Robert Elsmere" reached a sale in England of 40,000 in nine months, and not less than 200,000 were soon sold in the United States, "of which," adds the biographer, "150,000 were pirated editions." [6] Henry Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" "was translated into every European language, except Turkish and Greek," [7] and his "The Greatest Thing in the World" was reprinted in countless editions and sold at street corners in America by enterprising newsboys. Even the turgid rhetoric of Papini's "Life of Christ" did not diminish its prodigious popularity among those who cared little for historical accuracy and much for romance. Never were fresh translations of the New Testament so frequent as now, or the lapses from taste which some of them exhibit so lightly forgiven. The compact and cogent appeals of Professor Fosdick concerning prayer and service have reassured great numbers of minds; and the author himself testifies: "If any one had told me that some day I would see the

[6] Trevelyan, "Life of Mrs. Humphrey Ward," 1923, p. 74.
[7] G. A. Smith, "Life of Henry Drummond," 1899, p. 240.

book ['The Meaning of Prayer'] with '330th thousand' on the cover, I should have thought him crazy." [8] The brief and illuminating addresses of Principal Jacks have solved many religious perplexities and rescued many realities from shams.

If, still further, one should turn back a generation and name the English writers who then contributed most to reviving among inquiring minds, especially among the young, a working faith in the moral order and spiritual significance of the world, he would recall, not so much the theological teachers of that period, as the virile message of Carlyle and the daring idealism of Ruskin; and it is instructive to observe that the new needs of a later time have reinstated in their prophetic function these teachers of idealism, and that great numbers of young students today are reassured by the vigorous ethics of "Sartor Resartus" and the social vision of "Unto This Last."

Not less convincing is the confession wrought out of the sad experience of war, and confirmed by observing the moral degeneracy which succeeded war, on the part of writers who cannot be suspected of religious proclivities or prejudice. It is not the theologians and ecclesiastics alone who are now recalling a demoralized world

[8] *Christian Century*, Dec. 11, 1924.

to a revival of religion, but detached and secular observers, like the brilliant Utopian H. G. Wells and the dramatic iconoclast Bernard Shaw. "Out of the trouble and tragedy of this present time," Mr. Wells has lately said, "there may emerge a moral and intellectual revival, a religious revival, of a simplicity and scope to draw together men of alien races and now discrete traditions into one common and sustained way of living for the world's service. . . . Religious emotion—stripped of corruptions and freed from its last priestly entanglements—may presently blow through life again like a great wind, bursting the doors and flinging open the shutters of the individual life." [9] To the same effect is the sober conclusion of Bernard Shaw: "If religion did not actually exist, it would have to be invented. . . . There are probably more people who feel that in Christ is the hope of the world than there ever were before in the lifetime of men now living." Unanticipated as such enlistment of literature in the ranks of religion may be, it is a reënforcement which should encourage in the ardent followers of these modern masters a new alliance with the church of the Spirit.

One of the most striking evidences of this new note in contemporary literature is to be found in the unprecedented interest now exhibited in the

[9] "Outline of History," Bk. IX, § 1.

study of mysticism. It has repeatedly happened in other centuries that the externalism of the church of authority has stimulated a reaction in favor of the soul's own testimony. Mediæval mysticism and Wesleyan emotionalism were consequences of a prevailing formalism of doctrine or practice. The same phenomenon is to be observed at the present time. In the same degree as the church of authority has become uncompromising and assertive, a revival of mysticism has become conspicuous and persuasive. The researches of William James ("Varieties of Religious Experience," 1902), though they were concerned more with pathological symptoms of religion than with normal experiences, and regarded the twice-born as "looking down upon the rectilinear consciousness"—appeared at a most propitious moment and revived a sense of religious reality in great numbers of eager minds. From that epoch—for it was hardly less—there has flowed a continuous stream of testimonies and analyses, flooding over at times into psychical research, often turbid with coarse material, but satisfying in many inquirers a spiritual thirst.

Nor is this revival of mysticism confined to any single communion or type. It may be consistent with loyalty to Roman Catholic tradition, as in the philosophic insight of Evelyn Underhill or the comprehensive erudition of Baron von Hügel;

it may be expressed with the sanity and restraint of the Anglican, Dean Inge, or with the tranquil confidence of the Quaker historian, Rufus Jones, or yet again with the exhilaration of fresh discovery manifested in the German philosopher of history, Professor Otto. Or yet again, the hard surface of sad experience may be broken through by an eruption of inner fire, as in the flaming lyric of Francis Thompson:

> O World invisible, we view Thee,
> O World intangible, we touch Thee,
> O World unknowable, we know Thee,
> Inapprehensible, we clutch Thee!

In these and many similar types of teaching the testimony of the Spirit is freshly delivered and gladly heard. The present renaissance of mysticism is, in short, as it has repeatedly been in the past, a release from the church of authority and a revival of the church of the Spirit.

A further, and perhaps more effective, alliance with spiritual religion is offered through its expression in poetry. Here again it might seem that religion had to face a hostile, or at least a neutral, influence, rather than to welcome an ally. What could be less spiritually minded than the prevailing tone of much modern verse; if, indeed, so formless and vague a product can be described as verse? What protracted study of the commonplace, what intimate concern for the in-

cidental detached from the universal, what conscious superiority to earlier standards of rhythm and form, has vitiated the talent of many modernists, as though, to quote one of their representatives, poetry began with Whitman, while Tennyson and Browning were but versifiers! In such loose and reckless self-expression little hope seems justifiable for a fruitful alliance with the church of the Spirit.

Nor can it be reasonably maintained that the terrific experience of war was fertile in lyric expression. A few touching sonnets, like Rupert Brooke's, "If I should die, think only this of me;" a few brief and picturesque reminiscences of the tragedy like Masefield's "August, 1914," when

> . . . the moonlight runs
> Over the grasses of the ancient way
> Rutted this morning by the passing guns,

relieve the poignant note of sheer endurance or of repressed horror which the poets of the battle-front for the most part strike. The best they could feel was resignation; their religion was to stand and wait.

> "Is it well with Henri, and Jean, and Paul?"
> And the mother bowed as beneath a rod;
> Then she answered, "Aye, it is well with them all,
> Well with them all—they are all with God."
>
> (Scollard, *In France, 1914*)

An acute critic has recalled the striking fact that "our American Civil War produced only one good poem—Lowell's 'Commemoration Ode.' " [10] "War," he concludes, "is one of the worst foes of literature."

It would be senseless to bring a general indictment against the poetry produced since the war, touched though it has often been by satiety, sensualism, and scorn. An era which has produced such types of verse as the "Via, Veritas, et Vita" of Alice Meynell, the "Prayer" of Chesterton, and the "Calvary" of Edwin Arlington Robinson, cannot be regarded as without "friends and aiders of those who would live in the spirit." Yet it must be admitted that the passion for reality at any cost has reduced much versifying to vulgarity, as though, instead of driving the traders from the temple, the harsh voices of the traders dared to defile the sacred places of song. Over against Robinson's poignant lines:

Friendless and faint, with martyred steps and slow,
Faint for the flesh, but for the spirit free,
Stung by the mob that came to see the show,
The Master toiled along to Calvary,

(*Calvary*)

must be set Sandburg's ribaldry:

You come along . . . tearing your shirt . . . yelling about Jesus.

[10] W. L. Phelps, in W. L. Sperry's "Poems of the War," 1916.

Where do you get that stuff?
What do you know about Jesus?
Jesus had a way of talking soft, and outside of a few bankers and higher-ups among the con men of Jerusalem everybody liked to have this Jesus around.

(*To a Contemporary Bunkshooter*)

An advocate of free verse has lately urged the essential nature of "rhythm" as distinguishing poetry from prose, and, as "too often ignored by bards distracted by the obvious tricks of rhyme and metrics." [11] It must not be forgotten, however, that more essential than form of verse is material of verse, and that rhythmic imagery is no adequate substitute for convincing or elevating ideas.

It is reassuring, therefore, to note, among the signs of so undetermined and perplexing a time,—and in some measure as a reaction from the defiance of form which such a time encourages,—a revival of appreciation for the classic types of English verse. It is as though one turned from a muddy pool or turbid torrent to a clear and broadening stream. The source of this river of verse is to be found in the revival of religious life which occurred in England during the eighteenth century, under the influence of the Wesleys. Anglican piety had expressed itself in the quaint and gentle strains of Donne and Herbert, but was

[11] "Poetry, A Magazine of Verse," Dec., 1924, p. 156.

soon repressed in the scholastic refinement of Dryden and the worldly tolerance of Pope. "These truths," said the *Religio Laici,* in academic phrase,

> are not the product of thy mind,
> But dropp'd from heaven, and of a nobler kind;

and the *Universal Prayer* has the same quality of speculative detachment:

> Father of all, In every age,
> In every clime adored,
> By saint, by savage, and by sage,
> Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!
>
> Thou first great Cause, least understood,
> Who all my sense confined,
> To know but this, that Thou art good,
> And that myself am blind!

It was not by such abstract or well-rounded generalities that the religious life could be quickened. In Cowper, on the other hand, as has been said by a discerning critic, "we step . . . as from a frozen to a tropic isle of religion." [12] The observations of the condescending Pope:

> With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,
> With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
> (*Essay on Man, Epistle II*)

are transmuted into the passionate expression of religious longing:

[12] Stopford Brooke, "Theology in the English Poets," 1875, p. 15 ff.

I was a stricken deer that left the herd
Long since; with many an arrow deep infixt
My panting side was charged when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by one who had himself
Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore,
And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts
He drew them forth, and heal'd and bade me live.

(*The Task, Book III*)

From this source of poignant experience the river of English verse runs its winding but continuous course, through the lyrics of nature in Thomson and Gray, broadening into the solemn reflections of Coleridge, and becoming at last deep enough to carry in its current the doubts and hopes of the nineteenth century. Its moods of hesitancy before the mysteries of the universe are sustained by the confessions of Tennyson:

There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

(*In Memoriam*)

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be.

(*In Memoriam*)

and by the courage of Clough:

Hope evermore and believe, O man, for e'en as thy thought
So are the things that thou seest; e'en as thy hope and belief.

(*Hope Evermore and Believe*)

It fortifies my soul to know
That though I perish, truth is so;
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

(*With Whom Is No Variableness*)

Its reversions to contemplative melancholy find their discerning exponent in Matthew Arnold, as in one

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born.

(*Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*)

Ah love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

(*Dover Beach*)

That era of harrowing doubts and unanswered questionings has been, in turn, succeeded by a more restrained and patient attitude amid the mysteries of the universe, and religious experience looks for more substantial and unreserved alliances. With fresh appreciation, therefore, it turns back to the two great modern poets, whose rational faith is unperturbed and consistent,—the

teaching of Wordsworth concerning Nature and the teaching of Browning concerning Duty. To Wordsworth Nature speaks the language of the Eternal.

The world is too much with us; late and soon
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.

(*Miscellaneous Sonnets, xxxiii*)

Yet when the heart is "in tune," even in "the first dawn of childhood," the harmonies of nature are audible and entrancing.

Wisdom and spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul that art the Eternity of thought,
That giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain
By day or starlight thus, from my first dawn
Of childhood, didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things—
With life and nature—purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

(*The Prelude*)

This consistent confidence in Nature as a mes-

senger of revelation becomes the solace of solitude and the challenge to the will.

Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.
(*The River Duddon, xxxiv*)

Wordsworth, as has been fitly said, "Everywhere went straight to the inside of things . . . [he] spiritualizes the outward world." [13] Many a modern mind, weary of the artistic cleverness which disguises trivial thought, recalls the ardent and still timely lines of Matthew Arnold:

Time may restore us in his course
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;
But where will Europe's latter hour
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
(*Memorial Verses*)

Browning, on the other hand, with all his flashes of insight concerning Nature, regards its incidents as on the whole obstacles to be overcome rather than aids to spiritual progress. Action, rather than contemplation, is the path to certainty. Personality, rather than Nature, is the revelation of God.

[13] J. C. Shairp, "Studies in Poetry and Philosophy," 1872, pp. 63, 88.

My God, my God; let me for once look on thee
As though naught else existed; we alone!
And as creation crumbles, my soul's spark
Expands till I can say, "Even from myself
I need thee and I feel thee and I love thee.
I do not plead my rapture in thy works
For love of thee, nor that I feel as one
Who cannot die: but there is that in me
Which turns to thee, which loves or which should love."

(*Pauline, l. 828 ff.*)

It is the religion of moral energy and of indomitable hope:

For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

(*Prospice*)

Reflective moods find themselves reassured by the tranquil meditations of Wordsworth, but the far greater number of active lives which are entangled in the mechanism of the world or defeated in its battle turn to Browning as the ally of their courage and faith. Wordsworth's peaceful message is summarized in the sublime confession:

I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.
(*Tintern Abbey*)

Browning's martial summons is for

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.
(*Epilogue to Asolando*)

These powerful allies which poetry thus offers to religion contribute little to the defence of the church of authority. The Tractarian Movement of the same era "gushed up," it is true, as a "subterranean stream" into the unruffled flow of Anglicanism, bearing on its surface "The Christian Year" of Keble, and the "Lead, Kindly Light" of Newman. But institutional religion, by its very nature, gives slight encouragement to lyrical expression; and the poetry of dogma is more likely to issue into versified creeds than into spiritual songs. When, on the other hand, the longing of a modern mind is for spiritual reassurance and insight, without mediation of sacrament or priest, it turns back with undiminished responsiveness to the immortal teaching of Wordsworth:

Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!
(*Ode to Duty*)

or to the revelation of God in Christ as seen by Browning:

A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand![14]
(*Saul*)

The same report might be made of the classic period of American poetry. Neither Bryant nor Lowell nor Whittier nor Longfellow, can be reckoned as allies of traditional or superimposed religion. They all move in the region of free, personal and immediate communion with the Eternal.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.
(*Thanatopsis*)

[14] *Cf.* the notable address of R. M. Jones, "Mysticism in Robert Browning," 1924.

God is not dumb, that He should speak no more;
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness
And findest not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor;
There towers the Mountain of the Voice no less,
Which whoso seeks shall find, but he who bends,
Intent on manna still and mortal ends,
Sees it not, neither hears its thundered lore.

(*Bibliolatries*)

Not mine to look where cherubim
And seraphs may not see,
But nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me.

(*The Eternal Goodness*)

Even more remote from doctrinal or ecclesiastical conformity is the conclusion of Longfellow's *Christus:*

And I remember still
The words, and from whence they came,
Not he that repeateth the name,
But he that doeth the will:
And Him evermore I behold
Walking in Galilee,
Through the cornfield's waving gold,
In hamlet, in wood, and in wold,
By the shores of the Beautiful Sea.

* * * * * *

And that voice still soundeth on
From the centuries that are gone,
To the centuries that shall be!
From all vain pomps and shows,
From the pride that overflows,

* * * * * *

Poor, sad Humanity
Through all the dust and heat
Turns back with bleeding feet,

By the weary round it came,
Unto the simple thought
By the great Master taught,
And that remaineth still:
Not he that repeateth the name,
But he that doeth the will!

The prevailing note in all is that of personal loyalty, emancipated from external authority and dedicated to spiritual communion; a note which is most firmly touched in the last lines of Lowell's *Cathedral,* where American verse reaches its highest religious expression:

O Power, more near my life than life itself

* * * * * *

Invisibly sustaining, hid in light,
Not darkness, or in darkness made by us.
If sometimes I must hear good men debate
Of other witness of Thyself than Thou,

* * * * * *

My soul shall not be taken in their snare,
To change her inward surety for their doubt
Muffled from sight in formal robes of proof:

* * * * * *

I fear not Thy withdrawal; more I fear
Seeing, to know Thee not, hoodwinked with dreams
Of signs and wonders, while, unnoticed, Thou,
Walking Thy garden still, commun'st with men,
Missed in the commonplace of miracle.

Most completely detached from the church of authority, but with undiminished inspiration for the religious life, is the poetry of Emerson. Matthew Arnold, with characteristic audacity, de-

clined to classify Emerson as a great poet or a great philosopher, but gave him the higher title of "the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit"; and it must be admitted that Emerson's lines are often technically faulty, and that at times he anticipates the free verse of the future rather than submits to the canons of the past. Even if one accept Arnold's definition, however, it is obvious that Emerson, as a friend and aider, both by prose and verse, has been an unparalleled influence in modern life for those who would live in the spirit. Great numbers of drifting minds which have found no harbor for their idealism in the teachings of the pulpit have been steadied in their stormy course by Emerson's tranquil affirmations. He surveys the traditions of organized Christianity with serene sympathy:

> I like a church, I like a cowl,
> I love a prophet of the soul,
> And on my heart monastic aisles
> Fall like sweet strains, or pensive smiles;
> Yet not for all his faith can see,
> Would I that cowled churchman be.
>
> (*The Problem*)

He maintains to the end of his life the practice of communal worship in his village church, of which he had once written:

> We love the venerable house
> Our fathers built to God;

In heaven are kept their grateful vows,
Their dust endears the sod.

* * * * * *

From humble tenements around
Came up the pensive train,
And in the church a blessing found,
That filled their homes again.

(*Written in 1833 for an ordination at the Second Church of Boston*)

Yet his mind habitually moves in the larger area of beauty and order which discloses itself to the observant mind and responsive heart:

Out from the heart of nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old.

(*The Problem*)

Draw, if thou canst, the mystic line
Severing rightly his from thine,
Which is human, which divine.

(*Worship*)

For what are they all, in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet?

(*Good-By*)

"When we have broken our god of tradition," he says, in prose which is in effect poetry, "and ceased from our God of rhetoric, then may God fire the heart with His presence. It is the doubling of the heart itself, nay, the infinite enlargement of the heart, with a power of growth to a new infinity on every side. . . . And this because the heart in thee is the heart of all; not a valve,

not a wall, not an intersection is there anywhere in nature, but one blood rolls uninterruptedly an endless circulation through all men, as the water of the globe is all one sea, and, truly seen, its tide is one." [15]

Such was the poetry of the Victorian era, which still sustains multitudes to whom the traditions and instructions of the church seem ineffective or dumb. The religion of Nature or of duty or of insight thus inspired and fortified may leave these allies of faith outside the walls of the church of authority, but they still serve as heralds proclaiming the advance of the church of the Spirit triumphant.

There remains the most essential, and indeed indispensable, ally, by whose tardy enlistment the triumph of the church of the Spirit is still delayed. The Central Power which holds the key of the future for the Christian religion is no extraneous and coöperating influence, like that of science, or literature, or even poetry. It is no other than the church of authority itself. Spiritual Christianity, in other words, must remain incidental and occasional, detached from the great army of regularly enlisted lives, a distrusted heresy rather than an authorized force, until it becomes the dominating habit of mind in ac-

[15] Prose Works, ed. 1875, p. 369, "The Over-Soul."

credited teaching, and the church of authority itself becomes spiritualized, both in its conduct and its creed.

On every hand and in all communions of the Christian Church, conferences and commissions are at the present time gravely considering the problem of Christian unity; and the evils of ecclesiastical and sectarian division are frankly deplored. A church militant, preoccupied by discussions of the right to command and the place of each detachment, is not likely to become a church triumphant. Unity of allies is the most elementary condition of an effective campaign. For many centuries the strategists of the church have, therefore, devoted their learning and zeal to the procuring of this unity by intellectual agreement. Submission to a single authority, concurrence in a single confession, elimination of non-essentials,—all these ways to unity have been followed, and each way still appears to great numbers of Christians to offer the only practicable path.

The Council of Trent set forth with precision the view which has since prevailed in most Christian teaching: "If any one saith that Christ Jesus was given of God to men as a Redeemer in whom to trust, and not also as a Legislator whom to obey: let him be anathema." [16] Other

[16] Session VI, Canon XXI.

pronouncements of various communions abbreviate or qualify these terms of subscription, as in the Augsburg Confession of 1530, according to which "it is sufficient unto the true unity of the church to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments" (Art. VII.); or, in the Articles of the Church of England, where the demand that the Nicene Creed and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed "ought thoroughly (*omnino*) to be received and believed" (Art. VIII.), is guarded by the provision: "It is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written" (Art. XV.). With similar intention, the Westminster Confession prefaces its thirty-three chapters of doctrinal definition by the statement that "It pleased the Lord . . . to declare His will unto His Church, and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing, which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing His Will unto His people being now ceased."

Radically as these and many other documents may differ concerning the source of their authority and the scope of their demands, they are agreed

in endorsing a legislative, juridical, or governmental system, in which Christ is not only Redeemer but Legislator; or the creeds are completely (*omnino*) regulative; or the doctrine of Scripture as committed by the Lord to writing, is to be the permanent rule of life.

Several considerations, which even the present brief survey would seem to confirm, render this programme of unanimity a difficult, and even a hopeless, enterprise. Intellectual agreement covering subjects which lie beyond the region of proof is obviously impossible. The more thinking there is about religion, the more likelihood there must be of differences. Unanimity thus sought must be reached, not by intellectual concurrence, but by intellectual submission. The church of authority finds itself set over against the world of modern thought, not as an ally, but as an alternative. If the choice must be made between the creeds or the Bible on the one hand, and the evidences of observation and experience on the other, the Christian church is likely to become an alien in the modern world, speaking a foreign language, promoting an archaic faith, revered as an object of sentimental attachment, but without contact with the science, literature, and life of the world. "Defend me from my friends," said the Marshal of France to Louis XIV.; "I can defend myself from my enemies."

The chief peril to the Christian church is of the same nature,—not in the direct attack planned by its enemies, but in the misdirected defence proposed by its friends. If the alliances now offered by science, literature and poetry to religion should be withdrawn, this calamity would occur through the rejection of their aid by a dogmatic, self-sufficient, and presumptuous church.

An instructive instance of this impracticable demand for intellectual conformity is offered at the present time by the ambitious scheme proposed for a "World Conference on Faith and Order," which shall "attain the fulfilment of our Lord's prayer that they may be one," by the association of all Christian communions throughout the world which "confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." It is not necessary to dwell on the fact that this unqualified assertion of the identity of Christ with God would have been unintelligible to Jesus Himself, or to the Apostle who wrote: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." A more elementary fact in this and kindred propositions is that this programme of unity fails to touch the real problem of discipleship. To confess that Christ is God does not necessarily involve the following of Christ as man. "The devils also believe and tremble." The fundamental difficulty is not in the Christology proposed but

in the substitution of Christology for Christianity. Jesus, it is announced at the beginning of this plan of World Conference, prayed that all His disciples might be one as He and His Father were one; but if that unity were consubstantial rather than spiritual, then it would be manifestly impossible for the human disciples of Jesus to share, and the prayer of the Master that they might be one as He and His Father were one would be offered in vain.

Here, then, is the dilemma in which these dogmatic or ecclesiastical demands have involved many devout souls. They find themselves pledged to fixity while they are conscious of growth. Their obligation is to conform and their right is to inquire. Christian unity appears based on an intellectual consent while Christian discipleship seems based essentially on a way of life. Thus they are tempted to propose ingenious defences of unalterable creeds, while their real thinking is in another mental world; and the tragic issue created between conformity and character, reverence and sincerity, ancient symbols and modern thought, rends their consciences with doubt and despair. When a group of Anglican priests and bishops lately met in conference at Malines certain representatives of the Church of Rome, and proposed an agreement under which Roman authority might be complete if only the

validity of Anglican Orders were recognized, there was not the slightest indication of yielding on the part of Rome, and the Englishmen returned with the report that unity was "not within reasonable distance." Or when, again, the Anglican bishops at Lambeth proposed a working unity with non-conformists, under which dissenting ministers should be reordained by bishops while Anglican priests should receive a "commission" to non-Episcopalian congregations, the suggestion so seriously made was received by the great Protestant communions either as an unintended affront or as deficient in the sense of humor. Fraternal comity seemed imperfectly expressed if one group were offered a divine grace while the other accepted merely a friendly welcome. The minister of a Congregational church in Oak Park, Illinois, dealt so lightly with this solemn proposition as to say that he should gladly receive the benediction of the Archbishop of Canterbury, if his Grace would in turn recognize the equally apostolic authority of the Bishop of Oak Park.

Behind these disheartening discussions, however, which have perplexed the faith of great numbers of Christians, lies the truth which this brief survey has been designed to emphasize. These interminable debates, these Christological subtleties, these revisions or reversions of creeds, inevitable as they may be in the history of thought,

do not in fact represent the real nature of the Christian religion. They are its temporal forms, its changing vesture, its varying interpretation. They represent the persistent attempt to translate a Palestinian gospel into a Greek formula, to reduce a revelation to a system and a faith to a rule. There can be but one consequence of such undertakings, however authoritative they may appear: it is the detachment of the Christian religion from among the real interests which command the attention of the modern world. What may be the outcome of debates concerning the infallibility of Scripture, or the evidence of the miraculous, or the unique conditions of birth, or revival from death, or ascension into heaven, of the majestic figure of Jesus Christ,—all this is not so much denied as it is disregarded, as though it concerned a type of mind set quite apart from the ordinary ways of conduct or thought. Lives which move within the restricted circle of these dogmatic interpretations or ecclesiastical practices are apt to be unaware of this alienation. They commit themselves with passionate zeal to the propagandism of tenets or forms, while the great movements of science, literature, and social life, proceed as if the church of Christ did not exist.

Yet within this environing complexity of form and creed—as indeed outside of its circumscribed area—there renews itself the irrepressible convic-

tion that the real church of Christ is of another character and designed for another mission. The call of the Master, "Follow me!" "Come after me!" is as persuasive today as it was by the lake-side of Galilee; and when that call is heard, differences of administration are forgotten in a common obedience. In a word, it is the spiritual tradition, rather than the external legislation, which gives the Christian church its authority for modern minds. They turn from the disheartening controversies which beset and perplex them to the practice of the presence of God, and as they turn, or, as the Scripture says, are "converted," they find themselves sustained and directed by the completeness and continuity of religious experience manifested in Jesus Christ. It is not so much that they have found common ground below as that they have attained a common horizon above. They have gone up, as it is written, "into a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them," and have gained a point of view, a habit of mind, which, as again it is written, reports "that they had been with Jesus."

It is as though groups of mountain climbers were approaching the summit from different sides. At the base there is underbrush and separation, and one explorer calls to another, This is the way! and another answers, No; it is here! but as the various paths ascend they ap-

proach each other, and when the summit is reached they meet, and the view of all is one view, and that is a view all round. With a great joy, they discover this unanticipated companionship with the religious experience of all the Christian centuries, and with the teachings of science, literature, philosophy, and poetry which express the character of modern life. Here is the real unity of the church, the "subterranean stream" which "gushes up" into the sluggish movement of ecclesiastical conformity. When the first followers of Jesus described His mission they called it "the Way," and this became its earliest designation. "There arose no small stir concerning the Way," it is written. Saul's first "threatenings and slaughter" were planned, "if he found any that were of the Way." Those who believed not "spake evil of the Way." Christian tradition thus perpetuated the great word of Jesus Himself as reported in the Fourth Gospel, "I am the Way." His disciples had found a Way, which opened as they followed it into new truth, and might reach at last an abundant and satisfying life.

Here, then, is the call to the Christian church which it must answer if its militancy is to end in triumph. A despiritualized church will always remain a divided, contentious, and unchristianized church. A church which is primarily thinking about itself,—its tenets, its claims, its growth,

—will find that it has lost contact with the thinking of its time. A church which is concerned with saving its own life will find that it has lost its own soul. An apologetic militancy cannot anticipate a spiritual triumph.

Is it not time that the facts of this serious situation were candidly faced? Either the Christian religion must be presented as essentially a way of life, a practical loyalty, the maintenance of a spiritual tradition, or it will more and more forfeit the allegiance of modern minds, and become an object of habitual indifference or of waning sentiment. The church of authority will continue to command the devotion of adherents who can submit their reason to its rulings and their liberty to its laws; but on such terms it will lose its primacy among the practical concerns of daily life, and will survive and expand as an exotic growth of reverent reaction. The church which is to satisfy the multiplying and diversified needs of the present and the future must, without obscuration or equivocation, revive the simplicity which is in Christ, and reaffirm His message as a church of the Spirit.

"The Church," Phillips Brooks has said, "is but the type of the complete humanity—elect, not that it may be saved out of the world, but that the world may be saved by its witness." [17] "The

[17] "The Influence of Jesus," 1879, p. 129.

church," another spiritually minded teacher has said, in almost identical phrase, "is the fellowship of souls who in the spirit have found God. Sometimes one discovers its members inside the visible churches and sometimes out. The visible churches are the fallible endeavor to express in an institution, limited by human frailty, the need of man for God and the approach of God to man." [18] Even more definitely and confidently, the same ideal was expressed fifty years ago by Martineau. "The moment we set ourselves before the royalty of God, and ask how we stand with him [Christ], we know that beneath his eye there is a *Civitas Dei*,—an assemblage of men meaning to be loyal to him, and owned by him as willing subjects of his righteousness. This conscious community with Christ is the *Christian church*. . . . All Christian history shows that in all the deeper movements of spiritual life,—from the days of Tauler to those of the Quakers and the Quietists, —the hard lines of system melt and disappear without change of creed, and piety and love escape into unconscious catholicity." [19]

When the church of authority becomes thus the unencumbered bearer of the spiritual tradition

[18] Harry Emerson Fosdick, "Twelve Tests of Character," 1923, p. 65.

[19] *Theological Review*, April, 1866, pp. 296 f.

which the teaching of Jesus inspired, and which no succeeding period in history has wholly obscured, then at last, and then only, the church militant will reach its irresistible consummation and attain the joyful peace of the church triumphant.

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